

Lord, send your Spirit from on high!

Wisdom 9:13-18b

Psalm 90: 3-6,12-14+17

Philemon 9-10, 12-17

Luke 14: 25-33

The first reading acknowledges man's limitations, for who can know God's counsel and conceive of things as the Lord? Our deliberations are timid, and our plans unsure, and when we have many concerns it hampers the mind. It is the Holy Spirit sent from on high that brings us counsel and wisdom.

The psalmist understands the shortness of life and prays that he will gain wisdom and be able to set the right priorities. He remained faithful under years of evil and now asks for a time of gladness. Every morning his prayer seeks the Lord's kindness and petitions for success to the work of his hands.

In the second reading Paul sends Onesimus, whose name literally means "useful," back to Philemon and in fact has become a useful member of the community since his conversion to Christianity. He asks the Philemon to welcome Onesimus as they would welcome him.



In the Gospel Jesus teaches that discipleship means taking up the cross, turning away from worldly ways and detaching from all worldly possessions. Nothing is to interfere with the Gospel message and if even family members oppose it they are to be brought to task.

The Father is kind and merciful in his great power,
And yet allowed the Son to carry the heaviest of crosses.
The Holy Spirit aids us in carrying ours.

It seems that there is always a burden for us to carry along as we go through life. If we order our lives under the Wisdom of the Spirit and let go of needless concerns the burden will be much lighter as our minds are better able to concentrate on the tasks at hand. We look back and often are amazed at how quickly life moves along; the psalmist compares it to a flower springing up at dawn and fading by the evening. Our final evening will be joyous if we know that we have carried our share and then some. Think, think, think, and build up your spiritual life accordingly and realize that our best achievements come through self-denial of worldly values.

Jesus said to his disciples, Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. This may be a difficult saying to accept but consider how shattering it would be to hear, Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Jesus has gone before us carrying his cross, and he died for us upon that cross, so that each of us will be able to bear our own cross. Go anywhere and anyplace and you shall not find a higher way above or a safer way below than the way of the holy cross.

Be the most efficient and orderly person and order your life as best you can, yet willingly or unwillingly the cross will find you. In some mysterious way God wills us to carry the cross and learn from it. (Adapted from Kempis' Imitations of Christ, Book 2, Chapter 12)

