

September 23, 2018

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Wisdom from above is gentle.



Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

Psalm 54

James 3:16-4:3

Mark 9:30-37

In the first reading certain wicked leaders have been called to task by someone who understands God's justice. They are resentful and create difficult circumstances, including even torture, which will try the just one's patience and gentleness and see if God comes to his rescue even if they condemn him to a shameful death.

The psalmist prays to the Lord to be saved from the ruthless who seek his life. They are haughty and do not set God before them, in contrast to the psalmist who believes his life is sustained by God, his helper. He will praise the Lord's name for its goodness.

James emphasizes that **Wisdom from above is recognized because it is pure, peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity.** Conflict and wars arise from passions that overwhelm with envy and covet what others have. Most people do not receive because they do not ask and those who ask do not receive what is requested because they ask for wrong purposes.

In the Gospel Jesus chastises the disciples who were arguing among themselves as to which of them is the greatest. "If anyone wishes to be first," he says, "he must be last of all, and servant of all." He calls to their attention a mere child and says whoever receives such as these in My Name, receives Me, and those who receive Me receives the One who sent Me.

The Father empowers us,
The Son teaches us compassion,
The Holy Spirit guides us to wisdom.

In today's readings we are called to recognize those who are childlike in their innocence and trust and bring them to Jesus. We are to carry no memory of offenses, no desire for importance and avoid exaltation and never even think about inflicting and paying back for what we perceive to be injuries done to us. The poison of hate and mistrust dissipates when we discard the wisdom of the world and invite the gentle Wisdom from above. This Wisdom is juxtaposed to its opposites, "jealousy and selfish ambition," "disorder and every kind of foul practice." Take up a compassionate tone with everyone you deal with this week.

The disciples were reprimanded by Jesus because they were trying to promote themselves. Today this attitude is quite prevalent and can be readily seen by watching the many TV evangelists, each trying to outdo the other, each with their own little gimmick. It's as if they are on a trampoline, bouncing higher and higher for their viewers, but the problem is that so many eventually fail to land on their own two feet.

The snobs in the Gospel were the Pharisees and Jesus brought the disciples to their senses with very few words so that they could face the truth of being a servant to those in need. Jesus' message was very simple indicating that those who lord it over others produce no fruit because they allow themselves to be choked off by extraneous cares and simple deceits. The disciples were being taught to seek and find the true meaning of life and direct it toward genuine happiness. A wise man once said passing through this life, "How many things are here that I do not want."

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