

May we find the grace to reconciled

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

SIR 15:15-20, PS 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34, 1 COR 2:6-10, MT 5:17-37



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2/12/2017

Good evening. The Book of Sirach reminds us of our free will. We have the freedom to choose, fire or water, good or evil, life or death. It seems we always have a choice. What those choices look like depends on our maturity.

In St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, beyond what we heard today, he writes, "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things." 1Cor 13:11

I have shared two thoughts this evening, freedom of choice and the maturity of those choices. We also hear St. Paul speak of wisdom. "We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age but a wisdom that God has revealed to us through the Spirit." 1 Cor 2:6-10

What a beautiful introduction to our Gospel. It is there we hear Jesus saying, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." Matt 5:17 With the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus speaks to our heart. The Spirit is there to guide us in every matter. The wisdom of humanity is to look within. It is there that we find our heavenly home.

Jesus reminds us that life is more than a collection of laws and rules. In his time, the Jewish community had some 613 laws that governed everyday life. The Rabbis would ponder at length what constituted a violation of those laws. Jesus tells us that we must grow beyond the commandments to the deeper understanding of what God has written on our heart. "I tell you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Following the letter of the commandments is not enough. We must order our world from a deeper wisdom and vision.

When I was a child I reasoned and acted as a child. All children feel as though they are the center of their universe. At middle age, it is no longer about us, or at least, it should not be. Most often, our focus shifts to the family that we are caring for. This dramatically frames how we feel about and what we ask of society. In our later years, we may have the wisdom to look within. Doing so, perhaps for the first time, we understand that all of the law and commandments are fulfilled in loving God and neighbor. It *IS*, all about relationship.

Our presidential election has been divisive on a number of levels. One of the more difficult things is hearing stories of families members alienated from one another because of political differences. Within our St. Tom's community, there are some that will no longer join meetings because of others attending with differing political views. That weighs heavy on the heart.

We have a duty and obligation to form our conscience about political platforms. That is simply good citizenship. Whether our inclination is to the right or the left, Jesus suggests, we would benefit from the scrutiny and wisdom of looking within. Do our political beliefs reflect our love of God and neighbor? The worldview of child, teen, adult, and senior changes with time. We need to take the time to appreciate where people are coming from. The decisions that people make are shaped by their life experience and needs. We have not walked in the shoes of the other. Before dismissing one another, remember that their life experiences differ in ways we may not understand. We need to take the time to listen. Find the common ground in loving God and neighbor. So-and-so, may be a republican or a democrat, but when they are at the Gospel Mission, serving the weary and hungry a plate of hot food, their politics are not quite so obvious.

Monsignor Fitzgerald once wrote, “I want to see children reach out to every new morning with assurance, and fall off to sleep every evening, peaceful and full of their dreams of the day.” All parents want, food, shelter and a safe place for their children to call home.

Jesus asks us to go beyond the letter of the law and look within. Eucharist is that beautiful light that illumines the inner room. That light allows us to see the problems and solutions. May we find there the grace to be reconciled with one another.

References

All scripture quotations are taken from;. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

As always, I welcome your questions and comments. My email is fsila@sttomskazoo.org.

Note: In praying with this Sundays readings I was touched by how many have been divided by our presidential election. When we stop listening to one another, it does weigh on the heart.