

TWENTY - THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 09/4/2022

In contrast to Worldly wisdom our Scripture today talks about Heavenly **Wisdom**.

Our first reading reminds us that as difficult as it is to know with any certainty the mysteries of earthly life, all the more puzzling are the mysteries of God.

Therefore, the Wisdom that gives us certainty on what paths to follow on our earthly journey can only be received from the Holy Spirit whom God has graciously bestowed upon us.

Psalm 90 tells us to keep in mind that life on earth is so short that it can be measured in days. It encourages us to pray, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain **Wisdom of Earth;**"

In our second reading, St. Paul encourages his friend, Philemon, to do something that is totally counter-cultural. His slave, Onesimus, had run away. That was a crime punishable by death. Paul had converted Onesimus to Christianity and baptized him. He then sent him back to Philemon with the plea to treat him, not as a slave, but as an equal, as a brother because of his baptism. That can only be understood as "**Heavenly Wisdom;**"

Worldly Wisdom would take one look at our Gospel today and see it as a rubbish. Can you imagine it advising us to hate our parents, spouse, and children? It actually tells us to despise all our possessions! And who in their right mind can do that! It is important to remember that much of today's Gospel is not meant to be taken literally. Jesus uses exaggeration to make a point. And the point Jesus is making is that no person, pleasure or possession should ever be more important to us than our wholehearted commitment to Him. And such commitment is not an exaggeration!

Some years ago, a 40-year-old parishioner who was father of four young children was told by his doctor that because of a very aggressive cancer, at the most he had 6 months to live. As Psalm 90 advises, he numbered his days – approximately 180 - and reflected on how he could best live them in the light of Gospel values. He spent his remaining days doing primarily four things:

First, he caught the attention of everyone in the community by going around to all the people whom he thought he might have in any way hurt them. One by one he asked them to forgive him;

Secondly, he spent quality time especially with his wife, children, family and close friends - a lot of that time was praying together;

Thirdly, his wife revealed that he spent many a night in pain but carried his cross of suffering without bitterness;

Lastly, and most of all he treasured receiving Holy Communion every day. I tell the story because he was such a powerful example of one who put into daily practice, "Heavenly Wisdom!"

You have to ask yourself how many days you have left? Because we never know, how many of these four things should we start to do now.