

Homily of 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B (10-14-18)

Today is Clergy Appreciation Sunday. The readings have a special message for me as a priest. The message is a further reminder of what God requires of me as a priest, if I am to be appreciated by God and human beings.

The first reading tells me to seek wisdom because:

Wisdom is greater than scepter and throne (power). Without wisdom power is dangerous.

Wisdom is greater than silver and gold (material possession). Without wisdom material possession is vanity.

Wisdom is greater than health and comeliness (external beauty). Without wisdom external beauty is useless.

Wisdom is greater than light (education). Without wisdom education is worthless.

One of my favorite prayers is the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:7-9. I have personalized the prayer thus: "Lord, you have made me a priest. Being weak and fragile, I do not know how to carry out my duties. So, Lord, give me wisdom and a discerning heart to distinguish between right and wrong. For I am unable to minister to your children without wisdom and discernment." Also, I love to pray for wisdom with the words of Jesus; to be innocent as a dove and as wise as a serpent (Matthew 10:16).

A section of the second reading says, "Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart." These words remind me of the Scripture that was placed in my hand on my diaconate ordination and the words the bishop pronounced to me: "Believe what you read. Teach what you believe. Practice what you believe." The second reading tells me that the entire Bible is a constitution of wisdom. If I rely on the word of God as my guide, I will always discern properly and judge wisely.

The word of God directs me to keep God's Commandments as listed out in the Gospel: "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." In addition to these commandments I am to give up worldly possessions and follow Christ.

Like the disciples of Jesus, sometimes I feel overwhelmed by the demands of the priestly duties. Jesus encourages me, today, that I need to rely on God at all times since, "For Human beings, it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God." The words of Jesus also remind me of Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Other practical ways of acquiring wisdom:

1. Pray daily for wisdom. St. James writes, "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you" (James 1:5).
2. Be humble to new ideas and situations.
3. Avoid the habit of "I know it all;" and "I have all the answers." Scripture says, "The way of the fool seems right to him, but the wise listens to advice" (Proverbs 12:15).
4. Always engage in prayerful reflection for the light of the Holy Spirit before decisions.
5. Think before acting. Look before leaping.
6. Learn from your mistakes and failures.
7. Seek wisdom by asking questions and inviting opinions and ideas.
8. Invite feedbacks. Do not be afraid of reactions and criticisms. There is always something to learn from reactions and criticisms.
9. Be open-minded. Do not harden your heart.
10. Renewal updating programs are very helpful and rewarding.
11. Find wise mentors and spiritual directors. Scripture says, "Seek advice from every wise man, and do not despise any useful counsel" (Tobit 4:18).
12. Remember, an action can be right but not wise.