

25th Sunday B. “Violence begets violence.

Humble and joyful service is better than desire to be great”

Today’s scripture readings are full of wisdom. “*Wisdom from above is pure, gentle and full of good fruits*” (James 16.4) So, we will try to see what it means to us today.

1. Violence gives birth to violence: This is what we see around the world today. Some may think that if we eliminate some radical groups, they will be gone and all will be well. But in fact, we see that, these groups give birth to another radical group. (Eg: Al Qaida, ISIS, Hezbollah, Boko Haram, Hootie’s etc.) We see this mostly in Holy land and the surrounding nations, fighting against each other, thinking they can eliminate the other, be powerful and all will be well. But it doesn’t work. Violence is not a solution in our world.
2. We need to know that *life is difficult*. And we need to teach this to all, especially the younger ones. When we experience hard things, we need to be aware of them as an inevitable part of human life; and when good things happen, we will smile a lot more and be happier people. For this, we need to let go our desire to be great, rich and famous. Many today think to have their video go viral, many to applause and receive likes and cheers.

Today’s 1st Reading-*is a proto image of ‘crucified Christ’*: The wicked man said: ‘*Let’s condemn him to a shameful death*’. (Wis.2:20). The interesting thing is that as Jesus is getting popular and popular, he is becoming quite famous, but as he gets closer and closer to the Cross, less and less people to follow him. Yes, the just person, though put to the test, is going to persevere, as God will take care of him. God will protect Jesus in a different way, through the resurrection. And eternal life is ‘our protection’, our gift God promised.

2nd Reading: James is talking to *Zealots*, who are using violence to overthrow Romans, or whoever gets in their way. They believe that violence is the way to carry out their mission. This doesn't work. We know, time and time again through history, that violence does not work. Therefore, we need to strive to be gentle and peaceful. This is not easy, we know, but if we are gentle, then others will likely respond with gentleness, and the process to peace is possible. Therefore, we have to constantly *ask to be delivered from the violence that is within our hearts.*

Gospel: Jesus talks about his crucifixion and resurrection, and the disciples want to be great. They don't understand/ or don't want to. They want to be famous and powerful. And yet, Jesus would challenge them, by teaching them that they have to become a servant.

You know, it is better for us to serve others in very simple, ordinary ways than for us trying to become famous and powerful. We just have to let that go. And Jesus invites us to be like children. Now children have some bad characteristics. But Jesus here is obviously speaking about their good characteristics. We have to be innocent like children; we have to be quick to forgive, humble like children.

As we gather around the table of the Lord today, we recognize the difficulty of life, but also recognize that the Eucharist is our strength that gives us the courage to persevere; and that we are receiving the 'prince of peace', so that we can be peaceful and gentle towards others. Amen.