

Homily. 17th Sunday. Ordinary Time
Homily by: S. Mary Agnes Lanthier, O.P.

Today's Mass brings us bits of wisdom culled from the various readings.

The Response for today is taken from Psalm 119. This psalm used to puzzle me for when I read the words commands and decrees, I naturally thought of the Ten Commandments.

The Psalmist says, "Wonderful are your decrees, therefore I observe them." (But I would be thinking, "Thou shalt not kill.") Wonderful ?

Or "I love your commands more than gold however fine." (And I would think "Thou shalt not commit adultery.") Love that command ?

However, when I realized that Christ had reduced the Ten Commandments to two: Love God and love your neighbor; psalm 119 took on a different meaning.

"Let your compassion come to me that I may live for your law is my delight." (Ps. 119)

Yes, with the words of Jesus in mind, I could love the commands and decrees of love and trust expressed in Psalm 119.

"Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; for you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom."

In this Alleluia verse I am reminded of an answer I received from a third-grade boy at St. Therese School. The teacher had asked me to speak to the class on Vocations. Vocations to a third grade! I had not spoken to a third grade for decades.

"Can anyone tell me what a vocation is?" I asked the class. There was silence. Finally a hand went up and a little boy said, "A vocation is when Jesus speaks to your heart and tells you what he wants you to be."

Evidently it is to those who have the qualities of a trusting child that God reveals his wisdom.

At this time in the history of our Congregation, while we are asking God to inspire us to select the woman among us who has the qualifications needed to be our major superior, how relevant the first reading of the Mass today:

The Lord appeared to Solomon and said to him. "Ask anything of me and I will give it to you." Like a trusting child, Solomon replied: "O Lord my God, ... give your servant an understanding heart to judge your people." God was pleased and granted him a wisdom that was unsurpassed (Kings 3:7-12)

May the newly elected Congregational Prioress and her councilors take courage and strength from the words of St. Paul as he speaks to us today in the Second Reading, "We know that all things work for good for those who love God who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)