

2020 February 16

*Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

**Readings:**

*First: Sirach 15. 15-20, "He has not commanded anyone to be wicked". (20a)*

*Psalm 119. 'Blessed are those who keep his decrees.'. (2a)*

*Second: 1 Corinthians 2.6-10, "But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden." (7a)*

*Gospel: Matthew 5.17-37, "Whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to the hell of fire." (22c)*

***The Choice is Ours!***

Life is a sum total of choices. Any one's success or failure depends on the choices one makes. Sirach's sermon today is about choosing the commandments, trusting in God, living in faithfulness, which are matters of one's choice. He points out that fire and water, life and death, good and evil, etc., are placed before us and choosing from these is also left to our freedom, which is a gift of the Creator to humans – freedom to choose!

(Sirach 15:15-18) Right choice is the work of wisdom.

St. Paul attributes wisdom to the mature. The mature is a class by themselves, and becoming part of this class also is left to our choice. Right choices lead us to glory. Jesus gives the true meaning and interpretation of the law, commandments and regulations and they are there to be obeyed and fulfilled, which again is left to our choice. His interpretations are in contrast to that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who just look into the letter of the law and not to its meaning and purpose.

Jesus is very firm and uncompromising in his teachings, which tell us that obedience of the law as Jesus defines will take us above the righteousness of the Pharisees and the Scribes; the choice is between going like the Scribes and the Pharisee or surpassing their righteousness so that we may be in the righteousness designed by God, and thereby we truly grow into perfection as children of God.

Jesus, St. Paul, and Sirach are united in the position that every choice we make has consequences, which could be good or bad, salutary or leading to perdition. Jesus is laying before us an action plan in our living and dealing with our lives in relation to our brothers and sisters as children of one and the same Father. Jesus does make demands on us and refuses to make any compromise; but he does not make any demand beyond what he had gone through, what he lived and experienced and what he had endured. However, his demand to us is only to the extent possible for us and never as much as he endured in his life. To be with him and for him or not is ultimately our choice! He demands only our willingness. He does have provision for our shortcomings, weaknesses, and failures. He is there to support us, to go with us and to deliver. It is always good and salutary to be with him and go with him.