

Homily - Year 17 A - July 28, 2020

How many times in life have you dreamed about winning the lottery? Each time you pull the crank of a slot machine or scratch off a lotto ticket or buy an arm's length of 50-50 tickets, is there at least a fleeting thought of winning something? We know full well that seeing ourselves as winning the Publishers Clearing House constitutes a pipe dream. But what would you do if God appeared in your life and would grant you any one thing in life?

Well, that's what happened to Solomon in today's first reading. Solomon had become the king of Israel, and God promised him whatever he would ask. Solomon asked for wisdom in leading the people and in deciding right from wrong. Would each of us be as wise as Solomon or would our answer be for wealth, power, or prestige?

Here's a common expression: he or she has it all. How many times have we said that about other people. He's got it all. Depending on our generation, we might say that about: Jimi Hendrix, Tiger Woods, John Bellucci, Justin Bieber. Certainly the list of famous people who "had it all" is lengthy, but what happened to them?

What they lacked, and perhaps what we lack sometimes, is wisdom. In scripture wisdom is godliness; wisdom helps us see how God sees; wisdom guides us to judge as God does. All the things that we hold dear in life are nothing if we do not know what to do with them, how to use them.

Without a proper relationship to God, we will never know how to use what life gives us. I'll say that again, without a proper relationship with God, no matter what we have or have not in this life, we will never know how to use what we have.

Look at all the greats in history who have failed. They did not know how to use the gifts and talents that God gave them. The golden touch of King Midas ended up turning against him and led to his destruction. Dr. Faustus wanted knowledge and power, but his knowledge ended up destroying him. The great power and skills of so many world leaders brought them to the brink of seeking even more power and, often, to war to achieve that power.

Then, look at the greats who have been judged successful in life. Mother Teresa had the wisdom to use the little that she had in order to build up the lives of others. Great humanitarians used their wealth to assist those in need. In a vision, Our Lord asked Thomas Aquinas what he wanted as compensation for all his inspired writing. Thomas used his wisdom to answer: “Only You, Lord.”

Again, what I said earlier rings true. A proper relationship with God leads to true happiness and peace. Thus, when, in the gospels, Jesus speaks about the kingdom and what people do to achieve the kingdom, the answer is simple. They make the right decision; they do all in their power to inherit the kingdom of heaven, to be in right relationship with God.

Today, we should all pray to wise up. Pray for God’s wisdom to replace human wisdom. Pray for that right relationship with God. A hymn that we often use in church says it best: Ponder anew what the Almighty can do. God wants that relationship with us. May his wisdom replace our wisdom