

THE FIRST READING IS FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

In those days: The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, ‘Ask what I shall give you.’ And Solomon said, ‘O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?’

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life, or riches, or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.’

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS

Responsorial Psalm

O LORD, how I love your law!

You, O LORD, are my portion;
I have promised to obey your words.
The law from your mouth means more to me
than large quantities of silver and gold.

O LORD, how I love your law!

Let your merciful love console me
by your promise to your servant.
Show me compassion, that I may live,
for your law is my delight.

O LORD, how I love your law!

That is why I love your commands
more than finest gold,
why I rule my life by your precepts,
and hate false ways.

O LORD, how I love your law!

Your decrees are wonderful indeed;
therefore my soul obeys them.
The unfolding of your word gives light,
and understanding to the simple.

O LORD, how I love your law!

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE ROMANS

Brothers and Sisters: We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION.

Alleluia, alleluia.

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children.

Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

At that time: Jesus said to the crowd: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

‘Have you understood all these things?’ They said to him, ‘Yes.’ And he said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.’

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

As students for the priesthood 38 years ago we had a course called Justice, sex and marriage. Due to the debates going on about same sex relationships and the growing awareness of abuse so there was so much on the middle bit. The first and to us genuinely new was rather superseded. I had to learn by courses later and by reading

things like “The Common good” by the English and Welsh bishops published in 1997 preceding the election.

It made me think when I was coming into a parish how we are expected to love our neighbour; when does that mean to like them or their ways? I hope and pray that some develop because they seem far from the kingdom of God as they are. The ideal of love means more than just being kind, Pope Benedict wrote that justice goes before charity, it is not just trying to be nice as much as being aware of them as people each of value.

Love to others, the ones we are not immediately connected to, is founded first of all on respect for them as they are people, made in the image of God the book of Genesis tells, us and as Christians to be formed into the image of his Son. All people are worthy of respect and to be treated well. This is spelled out by Pope Leo in his document “Magnifica Humanitas” the “The Grandeur of Humanity.” We discussed this in a small parish group, and everyone grasped the basic principle but disagreed respectfully in some issues such as immigrants.

To love as God wants us to love means living out in a committed way our Christian call. This costs time and money and means effort in a constant desire to be right in God’s eyes. His Son has taught us to seek the kingdom of God and its ways. To live out justice means to respect different steps to work towards the Common Good.

The first is solidarity, the awareness that every human being is created in the image of God and is part of a network of relationships that bind him or her to others, to specific populations and to creation. (Pope Leo). Subsidiarity is the recognition of decision making at appropriate levels. The right of government, the autonomy of a school, the choice by parents on what is best for their children, are two key ideals underlying the dignity of every person and the allocation of the goods of the world.

To commit, as Jesus asks, means a firm commitment to social justice lived out daily based on understanding and practice. Christianity had defined the words we use to describe what is good to do; living out this challenge is a responsibility given to each of us.