

Homily – 28th Sunday of the Year B

When you want to make important decisions in your life, do you seek the Lord's counsel? Do you ever find time to pray about them? In your choice of a career, a spouse, family concerns, do you ever seek the Lord's wisdom in prayer? There are many of us who simply go with the flow. They never find time to pray even for five minutes. They can plan and have vacations that would last for weeks or even for months; they can plan recreation, picnics, shopping etc. But they never have time to pray even for a few minutes. They are normally the first people to say to a neighbor in need of help or consolation, "You're in our prayers." Or to families of victims of a disaster, "Our thoughts and prayers go out to you." Thoughts? Certainly! But Prayers? Give me a break! They don't! Just to mention the word, "prayer", does not translate into prayers; it is not equivalent to praying. Beloved, we all need to pray daily and frequently.

God our maker has a purpose for every one of us: he has a mission for us. Our Second Reading ([Heb 4:12-13](#)) shows us why we should always turn to God in prayer. Through prayer we are able to align our wills with God's will; to desire what God desires for us. "...the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart." God's word is like X-ray equipment or like a Scanner; it can reveal things that are concealed from us. Prayer is the way we make ourselves present to God to scan us and help us fulfill our purpose in life.

The First Reading ([Wis 7:7-11](#)) stresses the place of the Wisdom of God. "Christ [is] ... the wisdom of God" (1Cor 1:24). We need to desire Christ above all things. The author of the Book of Wisdom says, "I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me." Have you sometimes wondered why it seems that God does not answer our prayers? Scripture says, "For we do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom 8:26). The wisdom of God must be first. "I preferred her to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her.... Beyond health and comeliness I loved her." In spite of not setting his heart on earthly values, he declares, "Yet all good things together came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands." Indeed, "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt 6:33).

We remember King Solomon. God asked him, "Ask what I shall give you" (2Chro 1:7). This is just equivalent to Jesus' statement, "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and

you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matt 7:7). Jesus also told his disciples, "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13). What would you have prayed for? As many of us do, Solomon could have prayed for good health, power, wealth, kingdoms, etc. He needed these things as well. Rather he resisted the usual human temptation to pray in a selfish and greedy manner. He prayed for wisdom to serve God's people: "Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (2Chro 1:10; NIV). God was very pleased with him and blessed him with wisdom, knowledge, riches, possessions, and honor (2Chro 1:11-12).

Beloved, this is the whole point of the Gospel passage ([Mk 10:17-30](#)). The rich man asked, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus saw that he was terribly enslaved with material pursuits that he did not practice his faith any longer. He does not go to Church; his wealth and earthly cravings are his main priority in life. He pretends to be upright by keeping the commandments at home. That is merely self-righteousness and cannot save. Jesus told him, "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." Simply put, "You have to go to Church and worship me in the assembly". And he couldn't do it. What a pity! Hence, St Paul says, "For many... live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly...with minds set on earthly things" (Phil 3:18-19).

Just imagine how, at the start of the economic crisis two billionaires committed suicide. They were still billionaires but could not accept the loss of some money, so they committed suicide. Poor people, as well, struggle with detachment. I remember when I earned my first income as an auxiliary teacher in Nigeria 1980. My first earned salary was paid in arrears after three months. I had never seen so much money before that time. I was overwhelmed. As soon as I collected the money and headed home, everybody I saw on the way was a thief. Wahoo! Even for my meager income? Truly, riches could hurt even the healthiest of relationships. It's all about attitude. Let not earthly pursuits make us cold-hearted.

Finally, like the apostles, we ask, "Then who can be saved?" Truly, "For human beings [rich or poor] it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God." May God grant us the true wisdom through Christ our Lord, Amen!