



Saint Paul declares to the church in Corinth, 'there must be no passing of premature judgment. Leave that until the Lord comes'. We can be constantly tempted to judge others negatively. We see what we consider to be failings and we make a judgment based on that; we do not see the bigger picture, the strengths that maybe there. In the gospel reading, the Pharisees judge Jesus and his disciples negatively because they do not follow the Jewish fasting requirements. Instead of focusing on all the good that Jesus was doing, they drew attention to a perceived breach of the Jewish tradition. Saint Paul declares that it is the Lord – only the Lord – who can reveal the secret intentions of people's hearts. It is only the Lord who can see into the heart of another; it is only the Lord who can judge justly. We do not see clearly and, as a result, we can easily get it wrong. It is best to look to ourselves rather than to others. The gospel suggests that what we need to keep doing is to keep opening our hearts to the new wine of the Lord's presence and word.

Jesus speaks of his ministry in today's gospel reading as 'new wine' which the old wineskins cannot contain. Yet, he did not reject his religious tradition. Indeed, he was steeped in his Jewish religious tradition. He valued and appreciated what was best in it, but he wanted to bring that tradition to completion, to fulfillment. When it comes to matters of faith, we all need to be rooted in a tradition. As followers of Jesus, we are rooted in the Christian tradition, which itself is rooted in the Jewish tradition. Yet, we also need to be open to the new ways that the Lord is working among us, the new ground he is breaking, the new paths he is asking us to take. Saint Augustine once spoke of God as 'Beauty, ever ancient, ever new'. Our Christian tradition which seeks to express the Beauty of God revealed in Jesus is likewise both ever ancient and ever new.

Reflections:

Like the old wine, many of our former ways and thoughts and style of living have become mellowed and settled by years of experience and have become so much a part of the fabric of our lives!

Don't give me the new wine of change I am happy with my old wine of comforts and calm. Don't give me the new wine of spirituality I am happy with my old wine of worldly existence. Don't give me the new wine of holy things I am happy with my old wine of living life in the way it pleases me.

But the Lord, the Best Wine Giver (Jn 2:10), is intent and keen and even is insistent that we abandon Our Old Wines and drink of Him, the New Wine!

Do you want the new wine of joy and happiness in your soul and consolation of mind and heart? Then, you will have to abandon the Old Wine of Sin and impure life. Do you want the new wine of Justice and Equality and Honesty and Truthfulness in society? Then, you will have to abandon the Old Wine of corruption and discrimination and cheating. Do you want the new wine of True Companionship and Faithful relationships and Genuine friendships? Then, you will have to abandon the Old wine of company with Satan and give up envy and resentment and hatred.

Let us pray:

Lord, give me the grace to look for the new wine of joy and happiness. Let me take the new wine of Justice equality honesty and truthfulness in the Society. please do make me a new creation. Transform me and renew me completely. May my new life in You be one that continually receives the full outpouring of Your grace and mercy.

Jesus, I trust in You.