

## SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

By Al Mansfield

Sirach 15:15-20

Psalm 119

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Matthew 5:17-37

### WISE CHOICES

Earthly wisdom, knowledge and skill are highly prized because they usually give the promise of earthly wealth and success. The only catch, however, is that it is all temporary and terminal - that is, it is all destined to end someday. The word of God is constantly pointing us toward a higher wisdom for an eternal destiny, and today's readings are no different.

### SIRACH

In our first reading, the Book of Sirach stresses free will and the importance of making the right choices. We have the freedom to choose our moral destiny. "Before man are life and death, good and evil, whichever he chooses shall be given to him."

God is all-seeing and all-knowing. We are all tempted, tested, and tried, but Scripture makes it clear that God never commands us to sin and act unrighteously. The Lord always provides us with sufficient grace to do the right thing. Today's Responsorial, Psalm 119, is an ode to following the law of the Lord.

### GOSPEL

Today's gospel, as last Sunday, is from chapter 5 of Matthew - a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount. It is a long discourse, urging us not to be satisfied with doing the minimum to keep God's law but to "go the extra mile" in order to keep the law of love.

Jesus begins by saying that he did not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. He then proceeds to repeat God's law and expand on it. Not only is murder forbidden, but so is anger and hatred. Not only is adultery forbidden, but likewise lustful thoughts and desires. Jesus says it is better to lose an eye or a limb if necessary in order to avoid going to hell! Jesus forbids divorce and the taking of oaths: "Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes' and your 'No' mean 'No'! Anything more is from the evil one."

### 1 CORINTHIANS

In our second reading St. Paul says that there is a wisdom for the spiritually mature - different from the wisdom of this world. God's wisdom is mysterious and hidden - "predetermined before the ages for our glory."

The secular rulers - "rulers of this age" - did not know this spiritual wisdom, otherwise "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

The wisdom that is hidden in God has been revealed to us through the Holy Spirit. "For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God."

### GOD'S WILL, GOD'S WISDOM, GOD'S WORD

God's will - nothing more, nothing less, nothing else! The most important gift that we could ever receive is the wisdom to know God's will. The Lord promises to give us that wisdom if we ask in faith (cf. James 1:5-7).

God's word in Scripture is an inexhaustible source of the spiritual wisdom that we need. Of

course, *knowing* God's will is only one part of the equation - *doing* God's will is the real test. May the Holy Spirit come upon us, enabling us to use our freedom wisely to make the right choices.