

23rd Sunday per Annum - C
Wisdom 9:13-18b;
Philemon 9-10, 12-17;
Luke 14:25-33
Little Flower - 9/8/13

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today's first reading reminds us of the importance of wisdom while today's Gospel reminds us of the importance of prudence.

Today's reading from the book of Wisdom suggests that wisdom is to see as God sees. It is to see with the eyes of God. The reading is very clear that wisdom is a gift of God through the Holy Spirit. Wisdom, in fact, is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If I were going to translate the gift of wisdom into human terms, I would argue that wisdom is seeing the big picture, which is what God sees. When we can see the big picture, we can also think big. Today's first reading lists several factors that keep us from seeing as God sees, that keep us from seeing the big picture. These include, for example, our timidity and/or our uncertainty concerning ourselves and our plans.

Last Monday was Labor Day. To find purpose, fulfillment, or happiness in a job or career, a person has to see the big picture, has to look beyond the actual work to its significance, i.e., its meaning or importance. Many years ago, when one of my former students was discussing with me the possibility of studying medicine, I asked a doctor what advice I could give him. He immediately said that if a person's motives for becoming a doctor are not wanting to help or heal people, he or she will not be happy as a doctor. He went on to say that many people go into medicine for the wrong reasons, such as the money or the prestige, and they are the ones who frequently burn out early.

At the same time, if we do not think big, we probably will never become the person God intended us to become. We probably will not make the difference in, or the contribution to, the lives of others that God is calling us to make. Thinking big enables us to see possibilities. Remember Robert Kennedy's famous words: "There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

Today's Gospel reminds us of the importance of prudence. Prudence is one of the four cardinal virtues. In other words, it is not enough to see the big picture or to think big. If we are going to accomplish anything, we also have to be realistic and we have to plan.

Today is the meeting for all the parishioners of our *Connected in the Spirit* cohort at Holy Spirit at 4 p.m. With the *Connected in the Spirit* strategic planning process, the Archdiocese is trying to realistically plan for the future of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in light of fewer priests, limited resources, fewer active Catholics, and changing demographics. All parishioners of Little Flower, Holy Spirit, Our Lady of Lourdes, and St. Bernadette are invited and encouraged to attend this meeting to hear our cohort's proposal.

Finally, my brothers and sisters, all of us are very aware of the crisis concerning Syria. Pope Francis asked the Church throughout the world to pray and fast yesterday for peace in Syria, the Middle East and throughout the world. He is rightly concerned about the possibility of an ever-widening circle of violence in Middle East. As Christians and Catholics, we need to constantly pray for peace throughout the world, but especially in the Middle East. As we think about the crisis in Syria and what our response should be, I would encourage you to consider the point a priest made in one of the best homilies I ever heard. He said, "Evil never gains a victory until evil is repaid."