



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Loving Father, You have prepared a table before us. May we recognize the unmerited gifts You have provided and always give thanks to You, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

Whenever we run across the laws and commands of God in Scripture, we might notice how tedious they may seem. For example, try to read the Book of Leviticus at night without falling asleep. However, what appears to be monotonous and even redundant is very important because the Law of God is precise and God does not make a mistake.

This is why Moses tells the Israelites to observe the laws and precepts of God carefully. More importantly, Moses warns the people: “you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it.”

God is perfect and His Commandments are perfect. How can we add to or subtract from perfection?

Over the last few weeks, we have reflected on the Banquet of Wisdom. Those who follow the Commands of God sit at the banquet of Wisdom. Moses urged his audience to sit at Wisdom’s banquet so that all nations will praise the God of Israel. Then they will say, “This great nation is a truly wise and intelligent people.”

Question

Have you committed to memory the Ten Commandments?

Commentary

2nd Reading: James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27

Saint James reminds his readers:

“All good giving and every perfect gift comes from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by change.”

God’s perfect design includes not only commandments and precepts, but charity as well. It is not enough for us to sit at the Banquet of Wisdom and feast of God’s goodness. We must also share his goodness.

St. James reminds us that even our charity is a “perfect gift” from above. We are not charitable. God is. We are just instruments or conduits of God’s goodness as we feed the hungry from the Banquet of Wisdom -- the Banquet of the Lord.

It is not enough for us to be simply “hearers” and receptors of the word and commands of God as we sit at his table. As James says, we must “be doers” as we “care for orphans and widows in their affliction.”

Question

In what way are you an instrument or conduit of God’s gift to those in need?

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Commentary

Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Our six week series on the Banquet of the Lord began with the Gospel of John with the “The Bread of Life Discourse.” This week, we read from Mark’s Gospel.

Clearly this Gospel passage is intended to connect with our First Reading as we are reminded that God’s commands are perfect and nothing should be added to or subtracted from them. When Jesus is confronted by the Pharisees for not following the traditions of the elders, Jesus replies, “You disregard God’s commandment but cling to human tradition.”

Adding more precepts or laws to God’s commands is useless. Our desire to perfect perfection is like running in place and never moving. We can spend a lifetime trying to “wash our kettles” and purify ourselves before we sit at the table of the Lord. But, the Lord wants us to come as we are. He will make us clean. He purifies us.

The Banquet of the Lord is beautiful. Even His laws are beautiful. His Banquet is meant to be enjoyed. It is not meant to be a burden. When we enjoy God’s goodness at His table, then we are free to extend His goodness to others. Come! Enjoy the Banquet of the Lord!

Question

How have you come to enjoy the Banquet of the Lord?

This Week’s Task

In this fast paced life, banquets have become a lost art. This week, set some time aside to have a banquet. Get out your fine china and/or make your table look elegant. Gather friends or family and enjoy a real supper together.

Prayer

The leader reads the following from Saint Louis de Monfort:

“In the Blessed Sacrament
God loves us so tenderly,
He empties Himself completely.
O, who could believe it?
Withholding nothing, He gives his all.
He gives his flesh for us to eat
He gives his blood for us to drink.
He gives his soul, his infinite being
To transform us into Himself.
Praised be the Blessed Sacrament!”

The prayer continues with Psalm 15

Psalm

Response: One who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Whoever walks blamelessly and does justice;
who thinks the truth in his heart
and slanders not with his tongue.

R. One who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Who harms not his fellow man,
nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor;
by whom the reprobate is despised,
while he honors those who fear the LORD.

R. One who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Who lends not his money at usury
and accepts no bribe against the innocent.
Whoever does these things
shall never be disturbed.

R. One who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Conclude with an Our Father