

Trinity 10

(There are three choices of propers for each office this week) Sermons are provided for Morning Prayer A and Evening Prayer A. The others are to be written.

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 1:1-10

Second Lesson: John 8:25-36

Homily

*" All wisdom cometh from the Lord,
and is with him for ever. ...*

*There is one wise and greatly to be feared,
the Lord sitting upon his throne."*

What is wisdom?

Is it the accumulation of bits and pieces of information?

These times are called "the information era", because there is such a wide availability of facts. Science keeps coming up with more and more data. Newspapers, magazines, books, and now the instant availability of the internet, threaten to drown us all in more knowledge than we can handle. Does that make us wise?

Are we indeed better human beings because of it all?

Or is mankind still the same fallen creature he has been since Eden?

It would seem

that one thing this flood of data is saying

is that there is as much greed,

as much injustice,

as much obvious wickedness,

as there has ever been,

and there's nothing in those trillions of bytes

that run to and fro on all the electronic highways,

that gives even the smallest indication

that that is likely to change

Let's take it back to Genesis, chapter 3.

You'll remember that God had instructed Adam that every tree but one was his to use for food, but that one was to be off limits.

It was called

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The serpent, more subtle than any other creature, managed to convince Eve that this fruit, among other things, would make one wise.

So they ate. Did it make them wise?

It would appear that they gained a lot of knowledge, but did they find wisdom?

What they found was the ability

to be as foolish as they might desire.
 They thought they knew enough
 to make their own decisions,
 but did they?

Does our world show evidence
 of a wise and competent human race,
 able to make good decisions for its own welfare
 and for the good of this planet we inhabit?
 Or are we drowning in our own waste products,
 using up our resources,
 and mistreating one another?
 Our knowledge and our cleverness
 have made it possible to fight bigger and uglier wars,
 to stockpile unimaginable weapons
 aimed at each other,
 with the potential of really horrible destruction,
 and, closer to home,
 it has made it possible for us to abort
 ever increasing numbers of unborn babies.
 Are these examples of growing wisdom?

What is wisdom?
 Think on this:
 Our Lord said twice
 that we must be as little children,
 and another time quoted the Psalm:
"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings

thou hast perfected praise."

What is it about children that merits this?
 Isn't it, perhaps, their dependence?
 their awareness that they don't know enough?
 that they aren't strong enough?
 that they need help and guidance
 if they are going to make it at all?
 Even a bad little boy knows he's being bad,
 and looks over his shoulder expecting correction,
 trusting that he will be corrected
 before he gets into too much trouble.
 Whether he admits it aloud or not,
 he relies on the shortness of his leash,
 and knows he need those limitations.

*" All wisdom cometh from the Lord,
 and is with him for ever. ...*

*There is one wise and greatly to be feared,
 the Lord sitting upon his throne."*

To be wise is to know where wisdom comes from,
 to seek wisdom,
 not in the things we think we know,
 but in what we can find of the will of God

Listen to Our Lord as quoted by St. John:

"Then said Jesus unto them,

*When ye have lifted up the Son of man,
then shall ye know that I am he,
and that I do nothing of myself;
but as my Father hath taught me,
I speak these things. "*

Even He, who is God the Son of God,
looked beyond himself for wisdom,
and calls on us to look beyond ourselves to Him.
Wisdom is found, then,
not in the fancied great power of our own minds,
but in the mind of God,
as revealed in Jesus Christ,
as recorded in His written Word,
and as taught by the Church He established.

as He continued:

*"... And he that sent me is with me:
the Father hath not left me alone;
for I do always those things that please him.
As he spake these words, many believed on him.
Then said Jesus
to those Jews which believed on him,
If ye continue in my word,
then are ye my disciples indeed;
And ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free.*

Let us pray.

O make thy Church, dear Saviour.
A lamp of purest gold,
To bear before the nations
Thy true light as of old;
O teach thy wandering pilgrims
By this their path to trace,
Till, clouds and darkness ended,
They seek thee face to face. Amen.

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Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Jer 26:1-7, 10-15

Second Lesson: Matthew 23:34-39

Homily to be written

Trinity 10

Morning Prayer C

First Lesson: Gen 32:22-31

Second Lesson: 2 Cor 4:7-18

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Isa 44:1-8, 21-23

Second Lesson: Rom 12:1-9

Homily

*I beseech you therefore, brethren,
by the mercies of God,
that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,
holy, acceptable unto God,
which is your reasonable service.
And be not conformed to this world:
but be ye transformed
by the renewing of your mind,
that ye may prove what is that good,
and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

St. Paul here gives us an uncompromising message, one that is beautifully referenced in our Prayer Book, during the Prayer of Consecration,

"And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee..."

A lovely sentiment,
in words that roll trippingly from the tongue
and make a poet sigh at the sheer sound of it.
but what does it mean to say those words?
Do we have any sacrifice that means anything
to offer to our God?
We're damaged goods,
and sacrifice requires an unblemished offering.
Anything less is an insult offered to God.
There is nothing more clear
in the sacrificial instructions of the Old Testament.
In the Epistle to the Hebrews,
and elsewhere in the New Testament,
including in the writings of this same St. Paul,
the same thought is repeated over and over.
As the hymn says:

*"Nothing in my hands I bring.
Simply to thy Cross I cling."*

We have no acceptable offering in ourselves.
None.

But early on in the same prayer,
we find the context in which St. Paul's words
need to be understood.
Just before the bread and wine are consecrated,
comes a reference to the Cross,

and to Jesus . . .

*"... who made there
(by his one oblation of himself once offered)
a full, perfect, and sufficient
sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction,
for the sins of the whole world ..."*

And, when the Words have been said,
and the Holy Spirit has been invoked,
and the Body and the Blood are upon our Altar,
and we are still waiting
to be fed in these Holy Mysteries,
now, in intimate connection
His sacrifice of praise is offered by Him
on behalf of us His people,
and we are lifted up and joined with Him
in this Holy Sacrifice of the Eucharist.

*"And here (not somewhere else,
not by our own will or volition,
but within his own self-oblation,
in communion with His Holy Cross)
we offer and present unto thee, O Lord,
our selves, our souls and bodies,
to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice
unto thee..."*

Do you see it?

There is nothing, precisely nothing
that we can do without the Cross to please God,
but Jesus, on that Cross, offered us and all we are,
and at that Eucharistic feast
we enter in to that eternal Sacrifice.

"But, wait a minute", you may say,
doesn't that passage refer to martyrdom?
and maybe to living as best as we can for Jesus?"

It most certainly does.

The Church is built, in part,
on the blood of the martyrs.
The Church lives by the living commitment
of living saints in the here and now,
but the point is not
that we live out our own goodness,
but that we take up the Cross and follow Him,
that what we experience mystically
in the Eucharist,
we live visibly in the world where we live.

The key is in verse 2 of our text:

*And be not conformed to this world:
but be ye transformed
by the renewing of your mind,*

*that ye may prove what is that good,
and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

We've been offered.
We no longer belong to ourselves or to this world.
We seek to be transformed,
to have our minds made over
in the image of Christ,
to live out our lives by His will, not our own.
It's a process. We're not there yet,
But we're on the way, by God's grace,
being remade into a pure and spotless oblation,
transformed by His Holy Blood.

Let us pray.

Grant, O Lord of Hosts, we pray thee, that in the Holy Mysteries we may draw near to Jesus, the Mediator of our new covenant: and at thine altars be sprinkled yet again with the Blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel; and mercifully grant that, in this present life, we may so live that we proclaim that Cross and Sacrifice in this world and finally enter eternal life. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Lam 1:1-12

Second Lesson: Luke 19:41-48

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer C

First Lesson: 2 Sam 1:17-27

Second Lesson: Acts 14:8-28

Homily to be written