**“Freewill”**

All our readings today point us to the precious gift of freewill God has freely given us. Freewill is a gift from God that allows us to make one choice over another. It is a gift God would never take away from us. It is up to us to decide how to use the free gift. Though if we are followers of God, we have only one choice. The one choice we have is to follow the will of God. Our freewill should be directed towards obeying His commandments.

In our first reading, God through Prophet Sirach revealed the choices that we have in this life to use our freewill to follow God. But if we choose not to trust in Him, we would die. He tells us that when we keep God’s commandments, we would live. The choices God has set before us, is either fire or water, good or evil.

If we choose to obey God’s commandments, we will have the Holy Spirit the water of eternal life and we will know God’s ways. On the contrary, if we choose with our freewill to disobey His commandments, it would lead to our separation from God and eternal fire and death. In other words, God’s will, should be our delight and His commandments, our counselor.

The prophet told us, if we fear God, God will open our eyes and show us the path we should choose. It is the only path that will lead us to eternal life. If we choose to sin and allow our self-will to control us, then our self-will would lead us to eternal destruction because God detests sin. When we have the fear of the Lord, we would see the wonders of His laws and we would not sin because God would never make us sin.

St Paul in our second reading tells us that there are two types of wisdom. The wisdom that is from God and the wisdom that is of this world. It is up to us to choose with our freewill which wisdom we want to follow. Wisdom from above leads to happiness and joy that we cannot experience fully in this world. While wisdom from below leads to grief and unfulfilled life.

Wisdom from below, comes from the perception that we are wise in our own eyes. Like the unjust Judge in Luke chapter 18, we would have no respect for anybody or have the fear of God. We would think we are doing everything on our own which leads to self-contentedness and uncaring about others. This wisdom of this world, leads to death, eternal damnation, and unquenchable fire.

The wisdom of heaven, which is mature, leads us to God and eternal life with Him. This wisdom is prepared for those who have the love of God in their hearts. As St. Paul said, wisdom from above is mysterious and hidden. We have to want it, ask God for it, and God would grant it to us.

In our Gospel reading, we continue with the Sermon on the Mount that we started reading two weeks ago. In today’s reading, Jesus thought us about His laws. He pointed to us that no part of His laws would ever be invalid nor dissoluble until the end of time. In other words, Jesus ask us to use our freewill to obey His laws. He expounded or corrected our interpretation of them, so He could fulfill them and bring them more alive for us as God intended them to be interpreted.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus also emphasized that by the use of our freewill, our lives must reflect our worship of God. He brought this to light by saying we must leave our gifts at the altar if we have an inkling that our neighbor has something against us. In other words, Jesus is saying we cannot love God if we do not love our neighbor.

Jesus uses hyperbole to address the sin of adultery by expanding on it to include lust of the heart, mind, and eyes. His hyperbole is that if any members of our bodies would lead us to sin, we should get rid of it. By saying this, He is teaching us that sin would lead us into hell. Jesus also tied divorce to adultery by saying that a divorcee who has not had their previous marriage annulled, would be committing adultery should that person marry someone else.

God has given us the precious gift of freewill, and He respects our freewill and will never take it back from us. Some people use there freewill to do evil, but God sometimes, rather than take His gift away, uses His wisdom to bring good out of evil.

In other parts of Scripture, Jesus told us about repentance and believing in the Gospel. Repenting and believing means feeling deep sorrow for committing a sin, accepting and acting on our belief by stopping the act of committing the sin. Repentance and atonement leads to reconciliation with God. Sin and repentance underlines every teaching of Jesus.

As we come with utmost reverence to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask for His Wisdom so we can be His disciple.