



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 12th February 2017

In England and Wales

Cycle of Prayer – Racial Justice Day

Keynote: The wisdom of God the hidden law of Christ

Ecclesiasticus 15: 15-20

'If you wish you can keep the commandments... man has life and death before him... for vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing.' The way of each of us lives and behaves is a matter of choice for each of us, for God's law is written in our hearts, and with freedom we can choose how we live, how we treat others, and how we best use our time and talents. But we would do well to note the wisdom in this ancient reading: *'[God] is almighty and all seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him, he notes the action of every man. He never commanded anyone to be godless, he has given no one permission to sin.'* So we have been warned! Now, it is for each of us to respond as we may.

Responsorial Psalm 118 (119) – Love of God's law

First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 2: 6-10

'The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began... we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.' The apostle often debated with the leading thinkers in his day, as may the Christian disciple today. Paul makes the point that *'We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true... these are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything.'* This is the wisdom of God the hidden law of Christ that we have to offer to our world even to this very day.

Gospel according to Matthew 5: 17-37

We may not be familiar with the handwritten scrolls of the Old Testament and the tiny dots and flourishes of the ancient scribes as they transcribed God's Law. Every mark on the page was then subjected to scrutiny and minute interpretation as the experts debated the precise meaning of every mark and word. Speaking to his disciples, Jesus refers to the old law in these terms: *'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, says Jesus, 'till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved.'* Jesus then teaches his disciples about the real and fuller meaning of the Law of God. Illustrating his meaning with examples from well known sayings: *'You have learnt how it was said by your ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court...'* Then Jesus shows how the law of Christ has a deeper and much fuller meaning as he urges a practical outcome for any dispute: *'So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering.'*

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