

## HOMILY 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time

July 5, 2020

We heard in the Gospel reading today: “I give praise to you, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones.” “Little ones” is better translated as “childlike.” So who are the wise and the learned that Jesus is talking about? He is talking specifically to the scribes and the Pharisees. They have burdened the people with over 600 laws that they made up. They were so focused on following the law that they forgot about the purpose for the law. The rules were not bringing the people closer to God or helping the people to live better lives. They were following rules for the sake of following rules. And who are the childlike? Jesus is talking about the disciples. What was revealed to the disciples? That the new commandment, love God and love and serve one another can replace the law and the prophets, if we would just follow the new commandment. Sounds simple, sounds childlike, but easier said than done.

Sometimes we make things way more complicated than they need to be. This week I received two binders of material on reopening the school, one from the state, and one from the AOD. Some of the guidelines are the same and some are different between the two, but they are both very detailed. What is really important now? That we wear face masks when we go out, social distance, wash our hands, and avoid big crowds. That is how we can love God and love and serve one another. We need to prepare the guidelines, but if we are not careful, all of those detailed guidelines will not matter. None of us will be safe. Sounds simple, but maybe it is easier said than done.

We also hear Black Lives Matter. Some people want to say all lives matter and that is true. The Catholic Church teaches that we need to value all human life from the moment of conception to the time of natural death that means Black people too. But we need to focus upon Black Lives Matter because they have experienced systemic racism in this country for many years. There is a focus upon the police right now, but there is a bigger issue than the police. Black people do not have equal access to health care. Black people do not have equal access to employment or education. There is a bigger problem than just the police. In fact, overall I think the police do a great job. When I call 911 I want someone to respond. But there is a bigger issue. We have to have a change of heart in this country. We each need to face our biases and prejudices and eliminate them. That is how we can love God and love and serve one another. Sounds simple, but it is easier said than done.

So how do we move from the wise and the learned to the childlike? How do we gain these insights? In the Gospel reading Jesus says: “Come to me all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” How do we come to Jesus and how do we find rest? Through prayer. And the type of prayer I am talking about is being quiet in Jesus presence. Sometimes we make prayer too complicated. We have whole lists of tasks and intentions and reading and devotions. We can get so caught up in getting things done that we never connect with Jesus or find rest. I pray different forms of prayer, but at least ½ hour of prayer each day is just quiet time with Jesus. Sounds simple, but sometimes it is easier said than done. I have been doing this for over 20 years and it changed my life. Start by going to a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Sit comfortably and relax. Put yourself in God’s presence. Focus upon your breathing to clear

your mind. Pick sacred words. I say to myself love when I inhale and Jesus when I exhale. Your mind is going to wander, and when it does, focus upon your sacred words and your breath. You may bring particular worries or issues to Jesus or you may just see what Jesus has to bring up with you. Know that whatever you are struggling with, Jesus will be walking with you. You are never alone. This will bring you rest and peace.

When it comes to prayer don't be so wise and learned. Be childlike. Just spend some quiet time with Jesus.