

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jan 6th 2014

Today, the Monday after Epiphany, reminds us of our call to “do what pleases him”. The First Reading tells us “the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit whom he gave us. Beloved, do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God.” This is our daily challenge. Ignatian Spirituality speaks about the spirits and describes the need to discern whether or not the spirit, which is moving you, is of a good or of an evil spirit. In this daily challenge the good spirit can often be recognized by feelings of strength, courage, and peace while the evil spirit may often be recognized with feelings of anxiety, sadness, frustration and confusion. Today’s First Reading encourages us to “pay attention” to our interior movements and discern the movement of good and evil spirits in our daily lives.

Discerning these spirits will help us understand and live our lives in harmony with God. We must accept and rejoice in the fact that we have all been given different gifts, and those unique gifts should be acknowledged and celebrated and not kept under a basket nor resented. Using our unique gifts, honors God, but we must regularly “test the spirits” and pay attention to our interior life by reflecting upon our spirits and how they are influencing our thoughts and actions. St. Ignatius speaks about these spirits in his autobiography....

From experience he knew that some thoughts left him sad

While others made him happy, and little by little he came to

Perceive the different spirits that were moving in him; one

Coming from the devil, the other coming from God.

The Psalm today reminds us of our need to ask God for guidance and to trust that God will answer our requests... if we trust that the requests will be answered in ways that are of service to others and in accord with God. Throughout the readings we see the presence of God in the lives of people and God intervening to heal suffering, uncertainty, and fear in people who try to live their lives by following the greatest command, which is to love one another as God continues to love us.

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