

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jan 30th 2014

Today's first reading from the second book of Samuel made me think about how we should view and react to our successes. Obviously, any success and achievement is to a significant degree the outcome of appropriately using and honing our talents and skills as well as our commitments and hard work. But to some degree success is also due to circumstances, such as the readiness of others to cooperate with us and resources available to us as well as the overall social, political and economic climate. While we have some sort of control over our talents and commitments, the latter is strongly influenced by circumstances, chance and luck.

This insight, that much of our success is the result of a combination of our choices and the chances we encounter, can make us humble and committed to contribute to the development of social structures and domestic and global policies that provide a framework for all God's children to reach their potential and to succeed in life. At the same time, this insight helps us to recognize God's guidance and to acknowledge God's engagement with us as David did, saying "who am I, Lord God, and who are the members of my house, that you have brought me to his point?" David recognized that he was a successful political leader of Israel not only because of his talents and hard work; he sees his and Israel's achievements as the direct result of God's grace, bestowed on them without having deserved it. Humility and recognition of God's grace is the prerequisite for his and our wisdom. Struck with awe of this insight, David started praying "do, then, bless the house of your servant" and we are encouraged to do the same.

This insight and the resulting engagement with God, others and our society is like the lamp that should not be hidden but placed visibly for everyone to see (today's Gospel reading).

Let us pray for us, our church communities as well as the social, political, and economic leadership of our country for this insight.

Let us pray that this insight energizes all of us to do whatever it takes to create a just and fair world where all can reach their potential as individuals and communities.

Alex Roedlach