

## Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Aug 18th 2014

There are many well-reasoned reflections on today's gospel reading about selling all you have "if you wish to be perfect" and seek eternal life so I chose not to write about that wonderful passage. But what I did want to reflect on today was the responsorial psalm taken from Deuteronomy and the hint of God's frustration for those who do not follow his word. This reading was somewhat troubling for me as I see God filled with love and forgiveness but I guess even God has those days where his patience is tested. I thought the responsorial psalm illustrated just how frustrated God was when he said, "I will hide my face from them.....and see what will then become of them. What a fickle race they are, sons with no loyalty in them!"

As I contemplated these lines I thought about the times my patience has been tested and how I reacted to the frustration. All of us have had those moments when a friend or a loved one asked for our counsel and after we tell them exactly what they need to do they do not follow our advice — in fact they do just the opposite and a minor mishap often ensues. So the question is, do we reach out to help them again? Or do we turn our back on them and with a smug smile on our face say to ourselves, "I told you so but you won't listen. No, you had to do it your way. You thought you knew better but now you realize you should have listened to me. Maybe next time you will know better and follow my advice."

We know that is not what God would do; to forever turn his back. But what should we as Christians do? Should we not reach our hand out, yet again, to help those who have tested our patience rather than gloat about 'if only if they had followed our advice'? The answer is yes. The next time your patience is tested by one you love or a fellow worker try not to turn your back on them or lash out in an angry response. But rather, pray for patience and understanding so that you do not "hide your face" from them out of frustration. For experience, and even just watching the nightly news, has taught all of us that the worst way to try and solve a problem is to not talk about it with those involved.

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