

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Oct 13th 2016

The readings today speak to God's wisdom and our learning and our call to following that wisdom.

The first reading reminds us of our blessedness, our adoption, our chosen place in God's eyes....and how we are redeemed by Christ when we have failed and fallen. God has made known to us "his favor" by blessing us abundantly, and he has shared the plan for Christ to redeem us and to "sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth." It seems simple and straightforward enough.

But in the Gospel, we hear about the scribes and Pharisees who have not followed God's commandments and also "taken away the key of knowledge" or made it unnecessarily confusing for common people to understand the scriptural message. It is one example of how we humans can be hypocrites – intentionally or not – by saying one thing but acting in a way that is not in line with what we believe. "You yourselves did not enter and you stopped those trying to enter." Yikes!

Jesus is angered by this hypocrisy. The scribes and Pharisees are also angered by Jesus' words and end up acting on their own insecurity and their anger towards Jesus.

I invite us today to examine an area in our life, whether it be small or large, where we are preaching or professing believe in Christ Jesus but in reality our actions show something entirely different. I think of those of us in developed countries who live lives of relative luxury and convenience...driving cars, using disposable silverware/plates/other items, failing to take an active role against climate change, contributing to pollution and the degradation of our planet in many small ways. Yet, we believe in and have seen the beauty of God's creation and have heard the haunting and urgent call of change in *Laudato Si*. This is an example for me to examine in my own life. Maybe there are other examples in your life that show hypocrisy. How might I put into action my love of Jesus and my call to live a Christian life? Am I inadvertently preventing others from hearing or living out their Christian call?

"Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary use words," says St Francis of Assisi. Perhaps that can be our guiding inspiration for today as we try to live our Christian call in all that we do each day.

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