This evening's readings focus on the theme of perspective. Perspective has to do with how we see the world in which we live. We are invited to cultivate a biblical perspective

Think of the following example. When Goliath came against the Israelites, the soldiers all thought, "He's so big we can never kill him." David looked at the same giant and thought, "He's so big I can't miss."

In our reading from Wisdom we pick up in the book where we hear of the godly perspective. In the verses that proceeded the assigned ones for today we hear of an ungodly perspective.

In what I am about to read we listen into the machinations of those who want to torture a righteous man.

Let us test him with insult and torture, so that we may find out how gentle he is, and make trial of his forbearance. Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for, according to what he says, he will be protected."

From their perspective all the wicked can perceive is the suffering they will inflict on the righteous man and bring about his death. Wisdom goes on to consider:

Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray, for their wickedness blinded them, and they did not know the secret purposes of God, nor hoped for the wages of holiness, nor discerned the prize for blameless souls;

Their perspective has no way of taking into consideration the place and purposes of God. It is this godless perspective that is stated just before we read the words in today's passage:

for God created us for incorruption,
and made us in the image of his own eternity,
but through the devil's envy death entered the world,
and those who belong to his company experience it.

What a different perspective from that of the wicked. We are made in the image of God's eternity and even though we will experience death, and even a violent death that is not the end. Listen again to how Wisdom states this:

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them.
In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,

and their departure was thought to be a disaster,

3 and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace.
4 For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality.
5 Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; 6 like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.

During the month of November because of All Saints Day, All Soul's Day and Remembrance Day we are asked to think especially about our perspective on death. How we perceive of death makes all the difference on our perspective of how to live now.

Those who understand that we have been made in the image of God's eternity discover the freedom that Jesus expresses in this evening's Gospel. We see ourselves as those who are worthless slaves.

Does not this seem like a harsh perspective?

Well yes it does until we understand the point. We are to approach God with the kind of humility that is like that of the son we read of earlier in Luke's Gospel who realized he was no longer worthy to be called the son of his father and is ready to ask to be treated like one of the servants. When we look at our relationship with God from that perspective we can then hear the Father say. Let's celebrate and have a party! My son is back. We are to never presume on God's mercy and it is as we see ourselves as unworthy slaves that in turn we discover we are son's and daughters of a generous and loving Father.

With this perspective we can live with grateful humility in the present and face our approaching death confident that we are being shaped and made ready to share in the image of God's eternity and receive the wages of holiness.

To live with such a perspective instils us with a confidence like David's: He's so big, I can't miss" and quells the fear of the soldiers: "He's so big, I can never kill him".

Yes, our perspective makes all the difference.