

Homily for September 7th 2017

Have you ever been to a 3 D movie and tried to watch the film without the glasses? Although you can make out the action, because let's face it, most 3 D movies are flicks with lots of action, when you put the glasses on there is a depth of perspective and dimensions that are lost without those specs.

St Paul's encounter with Jesus on the Damascus Road was like the donning of those 3 D glasses. There was a depth of perspective he now had in his understanding of God, that he had not seen when he was a devout Pharisee. In today's reading from Colossians we are given a 3 D perspective on the Christian life that we can only know when we see life through the lens of Jesus Christ.

We can know God, serve God and perceive the inheritance that awaits us because of Jesus' incarnation.

Paul says he prays that believers would be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. One of the gifts of the Christian Faith is that it is intelligible and intelligent. The Bible begins with the declaration: "God said". John's Gospel begins with those famous words: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God". Unlike deism that states the God of creation has removed himself from creation and is therefore distant and unknowable, we celebrate that God has come near and is always near us in the Person of Jesus Christ. He speaks intelligible words that involve the use of our intellect to appropriate them and apply them to our lives.

We affirm that Christianity is a revealed religion where as we come to the knowledge of God's will we grow in wisdom. Think of knowledge as the map God has given to us in the 73 Books of the Bible. The application of wisdom is the way we seek to interpret that map so we can intelligently apply it to our lives.

As we come to know, through the use, of our intelligence the God who is intelligible we can lead lives that are worthy of the Lord Or as Paul says fully pleasing to him. The Apostle then goes on to state:

As you bear fruit in every good work as you grow in the knowledge of God.

As we grow in living a life where we are bearing fruit in good works we then grow in knowing God. This is because just as Jesus was incarnate in a physical body, when we grow in imitating him by our works we can then know God more fully because we are living like the Son of God.

To know what God wants through his intelligible word and then putting it into action as we serve him through good works allows us to live in the present with a hope of our future inheritance.

Paul prays that we would be made strong with the strength that comes from his glorious power as we are prepared to endure everything with patience in the present as we await to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

We can have this 3-Dimensional perspective because we have been rescued from the power of darkness. This is the power that wants to cloud our intellects and wills so that we view life as flat and unfocused.

But as St. Paul discovered, when we come to share in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, who is redeeming and forgiving us so that in the present we may know God, serve God and perceive more fully the inheritance that awaits us, we then live cognizant of the vivid and multi-dimensional nature of this world.

Our Collect expresses it this way:

Put into our hearts the love of your name, so that, by deepening our sense of reverence, you may nurture in us what is good, and by your watchful care keep safe what you have nurtured.

May we have that deepening sense of reverence as we know God and allow him to nurture those good works of grace as we look forward to the future inheritance.