

Third Friday of Lent – 2/29

"Thus says the Lord; 'It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; your faithfulness comes from me. Those who are wise understand these things; those who are discerning know them.'" (Hosea 14:9)

A mother gave her little girl five dollars close to Christmas and took the child shopping to pick out some presents for her father and brothers. On Christmas Day the child would give her presents out and everyone thanked her for the gifts. Eventually the child grew up and worked for the money that she used to buy gifts. She realized that those first gifts weren't really her gifts at all. Her mother gave her the gift of money so that she could buy the gifts for the other family members.

Those who are discerning in their heart realize that God has given us every gift that we share with our neighbors. We did not earn any of these gifts. They come from God's great generous heart.

It is easy to accept this when we think of our physical and mental abilities. We know that if we are blessed athletically that much of that simply has to do with our physical make-up. If we are naturally apt with numbers or words we have a sense that God created us with certain abilities in those areas. When we get a good job we thank God for putting us in the right place at the right time. Yet there are gifts that are not so obvious. For example, how often do we ever realize that our desire to do good is itself a gift and what about the stirrings of our conscience that lead us to be people of integrity? Is the stirring not also a gift?

Like the little girl who could only buy presents because her mother gave her the money we can do nothing nor be anything without God's grace. We cannot be people who care unless God opens our hearts. We cannot have hope in the future unless God plants in our hearts visions that take us beyond what we know right now. And we cannot be people of faith unless God's moves us to believe.

Those who are wise enough will come to understand that there is nothing that we can hold claim to as our own. When we realize that all is gift it can be a humbling experience and perhaps this humility is the greatest of all gifts for it enables us to see clearly that our existence is totally dependent on God.

Reflection Questions

- 1. Do I take deliberate steps to discern God's will?*
- 2. How can I use my gifts to bless my community?*

Prayer: Jesus all that I have has come from you.

Make we aware that without You I am nothing. Amen.