

## Ruminations

In the first reading (Wis 18:6-9) the author of the Book of Wisdom states that the night of Passover was known beforehand to their fathers so that with the sure knowledge of the oaths of God in which they put their faith, they might have courage. They awaited the salvation of the just and the destruction of their foes. For God glorified them when He punished their adversaries. For the holy children of the good were offering sacrifices in secret and thereby put into effect the divine institution.

### Something to Think About:

Quite frankly, this passage does not make much sense to me even when it is put in the larger context of the Book of Wisdom. The theme of the Book shows that Israel's survival and emergence as a people was due to God's favor toward the children of Abraham. God had chosen Israel from among all the kingdoms on earth to bring about the salvation of mankind. The author suggests that the fact that God saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians was proof in itself of His favor. Today God continues to favor all who believe in Him and trust in Him. He has bountiful graces that He wants to bestow on each person provided that he/she is open to receiving them. He knows the grace each of us are in most need of. Perhaps instead of praying for Him to give us something specific, we could ask for the graces He feels we are in most need of. I think we would be guaranteed to receive such graces and at the same time we are putting out trust in His knowing best how to help us.

In the second reading (Heb 11:1-2, 8-19) the author defines "faith" as the realization of what is hoped for and the evidence of what is not seen. When Abraham was called to leave his home to receive his inheritance, he obeyed by faith even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he sojourned to the promised land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob. He looked forward to a city with foundations whose architect was God. Although he was past the normal age and his wife was sterile, it was by faith that he was able to conceive a son because he thought the one who made the promise was trustworthy. From him came forth descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore. These forefathers died without receiving the promise although they saw it

from afar. They sought a better homeland, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for He has prepared a city for them. When put to the test Abraham offered up Isaac though he was an only son. However, he reasoned that God was able to raise him even from the dead.

### Something to Think About:

1. Some people quote the opening words of this passage as the clear explanation of what faith is all about. To me it never made much sense until I realized that the author does not just try to define faith in the abstract but goes on to show us what faith does. The heroes and heroines of the Bible do works by faith. He shows us what faith does; not what faith is. At the age of 75 Abraham, along with his wife, his nephew and his whole retinue traveled more than 2600 miles from Ur down to Egypt and then back to Canaan. He did this by faith and not as a response to faith. One's faith is demonstrated by the deeds which one performs. It is not primarily a system of beliefs. If we trust in God's promises we act accordingly. That is faith. We need not worry whether or not we have "enough faith." Rather we place our trust in God and then just act accordingly.

2. We all desire to increase our faith but to do so we must increase our acts of love. Faith is not something in us. It is a relationship with God: it is faith in God, trust in God, openness to God. It means allowing God in to inspire us to do works of love for others which is God's hallmark. That is why love of God and love of neighbor go together. Faith in God causes love of neighbor.

In the gospel (Lk 12:32-48) Jesus told His disciples not to be afraid for the Father was pleased to give them the kingdom. They should sell their belongings and give alms. They should provide for themselves and inexhaustible treasure in heaven where no thief or moth could destroy. For where their treasure is, there also will be their heart. They should gird their loins and light their lamps and be like servants waiting for their master. Blessed are those whom the master finds vigilant on his return. He will gird himself and wait of them. If the master of the house knew when the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You must be prepared for an hour you do not expect the Son of

Man will come. Peter asked if this parable was meant for them or everyone. Jesus asked who is the faithful and prudent steward that the master puts in charge of food distribution? He is blessed when the master finds him doing so. The master will put him in charge of all his property. However, if that steward beats the servants, eats and gets drunk, the master will punish him severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful. The servant who knew his master's will and did not make preparations or act in accord with his will, will be beaten severely. The servant who was ignorant of his master's will but acted in a way deserving punishment, will be beaten only lightly. Much is required of the person entrusted with much and more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

**Something to Think About:**

1. We all know that death is inevitable. However, it is not a punishment but rather a means by which we are able to transcend from this life to a life with God for all eternity. It is our exodus from this life to life eternal. Jesus tells us not to be afraid; the kingdom is ours. Who we are when we die is who we will be for all eternity? It is important therefore to prepare ourselves for that inevitable moment. The things of this life are meant to help us appreciate the life to come. At no time should we allow the things of this world to be an end in themselves; rather they are a means to help us realize the purpose for which we were made: i.e. to walk with God for all eternity.

2. Jesus' statement that much will be expected of the person to whom much has been entrusted has always bothered me. As I think about all that I have been given, I am overwhelmed by what God must expect of me. Yet God is not so much concerned with my accomplishments as He is with my efforts. He is more concerned with where my heart is than the realization of His goals for me. The truer I am to do the Father's will, the happier I will be and the more fulfilled I will become.

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