

Pentecost 2

“O God, Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right and by your merciful guiding may do them....”

These phrases from this week’s Collect urge us, by God’s grace, not only to think those things that are right but to do them as well. There are four areas of life in which we are called to exhibit such behavior: our own lives as individuals, our behavior within our family and our community and our relationship with God.

The Collect informs us of where the impetus for such behavior is to be found. We are requesting that God inspire us to think those things that are right and by God’s merciful guiding give us the will to perform them. We are called to an understanding of life that says nothing of value, nothing that is sacred, nothing that is worthwhile begins with us; rather the impetus, the inspiration, the will for such behavior begins with God. God is the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of not some persons and some things but of all persons and all things. And the response we are called to make to that reality is not to lower our heads in subservience but to raise our hearts and our hands in thanksgiving. We are called, through a life of thanksgiving, to be praisers of God. It is as praisers of God, we ourselves, we within our family, we within our community become sacred and holy vessels performing significant and worthwhile acts of love and mercy.

We are called to serve God; we are also called to serve ourselves. We do this by nourishing our souls. God knows that if we are going to be creative channels of God’s grace in the lives of those we touch, we first have to be willing and eager to be the recipients of that grace. That grace comes from God. We receive it through prayers, worship, reading of Scripture, literary works and meditation. We also receive God’s grace through the lives of others who in their time serve as channels of God’s grace to us.

We are called to serve God and ourselves; we are also called to a lifestyle and behavior pattern that enhances family and community life. We do that by being in touch with God and ourselves. Being open to God's grace in our lives allows us to discern and respond more appropriately to the needs, desires and yearnings of those within our family and our community. When we are most open to God's grace we are open to acknowledging those things we do that hamper healthy relationships; we are open to our own need for repentance, we are open to the need others have for our forgiveness of them and we are open to discovering more creative ways to live with one another in family and community.

God is the continuing giver of grace; God offers it for our well-being. May God give us the discernment to receive that grace and the will to be vessels that dispense that grace within ourselves and to those whose lives we touch.

Amen