

Sixth Sunday of Easter
Cycle C – May 8-9, 2010

“Life is Difficult”

There is a book out there entitled, *“The Road Less Traveled,”* by M. Scott Peck, who is an Episcopal Priest and a fully degreed psychiatrist. Fr. Peck begins his book with the sentence, “Life is Difficult.” There are two things to learn from his opening sentence. **1)** Once we accept that life is difficult, life is much more manageable and not so difficult. **2)** Those who always think that life should not be difficult will always find that it is. The question arises, **a)** do we want to live by wisdom and manage life, or **b)** do we want to live by deceiving ourselves?

An acquaintance of mine was in the practice of helping the elderly priests in a Benedictine Monastery in Indiana. He was careful to help a particularly old priest. One day as my friend was wheeling the old priest to chapel, the old priest became vocal and scolded the young priest, “Young man you forgot my false teeth, I have the wrong size t-shirt on under this habit, and I’m about to die.” And the old priest did. The young priest was shocked and later told me rather pessimistically, “So much for good deeds; they never go unpunished.” Life is difficult.

I believe it is our desire to accept the fact that life is difficult. Things, often, never turn out the way we want. But once we accept that life is difficult, life is much more manageable and not so difficult as it might first seem. And, to manage life is the way of wisdom. It is also the way of truth.

Wisdom and truth. Wisdom is understanding. Understanding reveals truth. The truth about this visible creation is that it's not easy; it's tough; it's not fair; it's sinful; it's competitive to a degrading degree; it has no respect for those involved in the game of life. But there is another side of truth, taught by Jesus, and supported by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Christ's truth about visible creation is that it has been overcome and is manageable by Jesus, with Jesus, and in Jesus because Jesus has conquered this world. That's wisdom. That's truth.

I have a friend who was stationed in Iraq. When he was there, every new neighborhood, every new street in the neighborhood, every building on the street presented a challenge of terrorism. He saw few men live and he saw many die. Sleep was impossible. Each soldier had to be on his guard all the time. The man resorted to

his Catholic religion to sustain himself. "If Jesus could look at all this evil squarely in the eye and change it, so can I," he said. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the soldier's wisdom grew deeper and he grasped the truth of his Catholic-Christian faith; that Christ has conquered even the most frightening and heinous evil. Once he understood wisdom and truth the soldier had peace, not the world's peace which offers escape, but the peace of Jesus which is the peace of conquest, the peace of looking evil in the eye and saying "no" to it. In his heart of hearts he knew that Jesus was with him, would guard him, and ease his fears. The soldier would pray, "what would Jesus think about this; how would He manage it; how would Jesus keep calm and find peace." The soldier's actions boil down to an inner strength of wisdom, truth, and peace. Did everything work out picture perfect each day? "No," said the soldier. "I expected difficulty each day, but together we managed." "Together?" I asked, "what does that mean?" "Jesus and me," he said, "together, Jesus and me." That soldier had an inner strength that was Jesus who gave him wisdom, truth, and peace.

So we pray: *Dear Lord, "Life is Difficult." From the moment we are born to the moment we die; from the moment we rise from bed to the moment we retire for sleep; from the moment people enter into our lives, loved ones and adversaries alike, to the moment they leave, life is a struggle. Let us not be afraid of the struggle as You Lord were not afraid of Your struggle. Despite our pain, shame, and hurts give us Your Holy Spirit, Your wisdom to discern Your truth in our lives and so find true and everlasting peace, Your peace, Lord Jesus. A prayer we make in the name of Christ who lives forever and ever. Amen.*

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