

In our country, pretty much every person when they reach the age of sixteen gets their drivers license. In Michigan, it's pretty consistent ... the school district usually sponsors a drivers education class, or else in some places you can go to a local company. You sit through classes, you drive with an instructor, you take tests, you park around cones ... and if you pass - you get your learners permit. Then you drive for a few months with a parent or another licensed driver; and when the time comes - usually on or around your sixteenth birthday ... you go to the Secretary of State Office, take the tests, and get your license.

Overseas, it's not so easy. In Japan, the classes to learn how to drive cost almost as much as buying a car. And for the first year or so of driving, you have to display a big green sticker in your rear window or stuck on your bumper. In China, getting a license is such a big deal that most people consider it a life-time investment and when they jump through all the hoops pay all of the bribes and finally get their license ... they quit their job - whether it be in finance or teaching - and become a professional driver.

Two weeks ago, we heard the Gospel of the Beatitudes - what I called the commandments for the Kingdom of God. Last week, Deacon John spoke on the sins of omission - the good that we fail to do or the good that we avoid for various reasons.

In today's readings, we hear a lot about God's wisdom and how that relates to His commandments. In the first reading, we are told:

If you choose [,] you can keep the commandments, [and] they will save you.

Often times when we think of God's commandments, we think of the Ten Commandments. We may not remember their order, and we may not always remember what they all are, but it seems that most everyone remembers "Thou shalt not kill." And we judge ourselves according to that - namely - if we haven't murder anyone in cold blood, then we're doing just fine.

Other times, we pride ourselves on what we may construe as our holiness. After all, we come to church on the weekend - if we don't have anything better to do. And we figure that if we do that, the bad stuff we do on a regular basis will all balance out.

The first reading ends with a very bold statement:

*No one does [God] command to act unjustly,
to none does [God] give license to sin.*

We live in an age where sin has been replaced with psycho-babble. Society provides us a license to sin - if we choose the wisdom of this age over the wisdom of God.

And as if that's not enough, in today's Gospel, Jesus raises the bar even higher. It's not just murder - Jesus equates anger to murder. It's not just adultery - Jesus equates lust to adultery.

People like to act fast and loose with their moral lives, and like to hold up "don't judge me" as a shield to avoid scrutiny. But Saint Paul reminds us all that:

the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.

Our minds and our thoughts and our mouths and our words will convict us constantly of our own sins. What are we watching on TV or on the Internet? What are we saying about people that isn't true? What do we think about others that we have no right to think?

Lying is wrong. Even if you don't really like the person. Gossip is wrong. Even if what you're saying might be true - and especially if what your saying isn't true. Harsh judgements about other people's motives will subject us to the judgement of God. Giving offense by using bad language all the time, or by dressing in a way that leads someone else to sin is wrong. Taking offense when no offense was intended is a sin against pride.

We need to spend less time with Oprah, Dr. Phil, and Jerry Springer - and more time with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We don't need Judge Judy or Judge Joe Brown as much as we need Our Lady and the Communion of Saints.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ - let us take a serious assessment of where we've chosen to live our moral lives. Let us look at how low we've set the bar - and realize that Jesus demands that we raise the bar above the bare minimum - but that He doesn't stop there. Through the grace of the Sacraments, God provides us with the means to live well above the bar.

If only we make the choice for Christ. If only we lose the wisdom of the age and take on:

*God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden,
which God predetermined ... for our glory.*

Only then are we living the life of the beloved of God. The life we are each called to by our baptism.

Let us resolve to begin today to live as the daughters and sons of God the Father, redeemed in Jesus Christ, so that we may be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.