

Homily for the 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time  
August 11, 2019  
By Nick Thompson

The Book of Wisdom speaks to us of a faith older than the Israelite's Passover from Egypt. The sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the twelve tribes of Israel, knew beforehand based on God's covenant with Abraham that their Passover from Egypt their freedom from slavery would come. Based on the sure knowledge of the oaths in which they put their faith, these stories are passed down from father's, grandfathers, great grandfathers for 40 generations. When the Israelites cried out to God in their slavery he answered because they believed he was and believed he would preserve his covenant with Abraham.

The psalmist, King David, sings of this same faith, "Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our hope and our shield. May your kindness O Lord be upon us who have put our hope in you." The Letter to Hebrews passes on the same legacy of faith given to Abraham by God. It defines faith as the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. Abraham it tells us is willing to offer Isaac in sacrifice because he reasons that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol of faith. Abraham's faith, our faith, is realized in the resurrection of Jesus.

Do we possess the same faith in Jesus Christ that our forefathers possessed in God the Father? Do we believe Jesus when he tells us “Do not be afraid any longer little flock for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom? In just minutes we will profess together our creed, our oath, our faith. We will say together that “we believe in the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting.” Death is not an ending then but rather a beginning to life everlasting and we need to be prepared for the hour life everlasting comes. Peter asks, “Lord is this parable meant for us or for everyone?” And Jesus in answer presents us today with a multiple choice question as to how everlasting life will go for us at our physical death, at our Passover from mortal to immortal life, “Who then is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?” We can choose option “A” to be the Blessed servant who is following Jesus’ command to love our neighbor and thereby find ourselves receiving the full benefits of the Kingdom of heaven. We can choose option “B” to be the fully informed servant who despite knowledge of his instruction actively works against Jesus’ teaching and thereby find ourselves severely punished and placed with the unfaithful in hell. We can choose option “C” to be the fully informed servant who knows but chooses not to act on Jesus teaching and thereby find ourselves severely punished in purgatory. Unfortunately, because we are here today, we cannot choose option “D” ignorance, lacking

knowledge of Jesus, and thereby find ourselves lightly punished in purgatory.

Nowhere does Jesus let us choose an option “E” “None of the above.” Whether we want it to or not after mortal death, immortal life will begin. We do not get to choose not rising from the dead because it is not an option. No one, once conceived, simply gets to choose to go out of existence, all rise from the dead, all are judged. Judged based on what? Well judged on what we have been hearing for the last four Sundays to mention a few. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your being with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself; Showing indiscriminate mercy to neighbor as shown by the good Samaritan; Desiring to sit at Jesus’ feet like Mary gaining knowledge through his Word in scripture; Learning the value of persistent prayer invoking the Holy Spirit so that in seeking we find and in knocking the door will be opened; Taking care to guard against all greed for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions; Detaching ourselves from earthly possessions and seeking the treasure in heaven.

Because we are here, we are already the people entrusted with much. Because we will come back next week and the week after that we are already amongst those entrusted with more and therefore among those of whom more will be demanded. If we want to avoid severe punishment long or short term our only option is to be ready to

open immediately when Jesus comes and knocks. Simply acting to avoid severe punishment however does not fulfill the requirement to love God or our neighbor. We end up choosing option “C” by default. Suddenly for us the question proposed by Jesus becomes quite clear. We must learn to trust, to love, to open our hearts and minds to faith in God and our fellow men. It’s time to focus on inexhaustible treasure, to seek heaven as our true homeland and to acknowledge ourselves to be strangers and aliens on earth in these mortal bodies. If we want heaven the faith of our fathers suggests that we must live now as if we are already there. Love begins with relationship, a smile, an embrace, an introduction, a conversation. We celebrate love throughout our Sunday liturgy when we arrive, when we pray and sing, at the offertory, at the sign of peace, in sharing our Lord’s body and blood, as we are sent out to love and to serve the Lord. What if we had enough faith in the Lord to simply be obedient and live our entire lives as a liturgy? Could choosing option “A” possibly be that simple?