

Homily: 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Cycle C: Wis 9:13 -18 b; Ps 90; Phlm 9-10, 12-17; Lk 14: 25-33

***“How to spiritually deal with the “disappointments” of life”***

1. It's been said by the saints of various times and places and vocations that we need grow in wisdom in this earthly life ***by learning from the past, living in the present moment and entrusting the future to God's Providential care.*** You see this play out especially when we run into disappointments of various sorts. **Some examples in earthly life:** *we have high hopes for a situation to be corrected with our health or the health of a loved one, and then the medical people don't see it the same way or are even seemingly callous or uncaring - a particular challenge today in the post-Covid world. We have high hopes for our marriage when we enter into it, and yet over time the challenges seemingly beat us and our spouse down that we're at the point now that we just tolerate each other. We had high hopes for our children and making their path in this world in a good way, but at least one is struggling mightily and we don't know what to do. And then in the spiritual realm: we were hoping to grow steadily in holiness and virtue and yet sometimes we spin our wheels and go backwards. We would like to go to daily Mass and Holy Hour and Confession more, but then we don't really do it much – if at all. The same goes with daily recitation of the Rosary and Divine Mercy chaplet. What's going on with all this? Often times we are relying too much on our own power and strength and intelligence and falling short of the mark because we need to actually and actively rely on the Lord and the gift of His counsel and grace and strength that is made perfect in our human weakness,* as the 1<sup>st</sup> reading from the Book of Wisdom points out.
2. ***In every age, O Lord, You have been our refuge.*** Psalm 90 the responsorial psalm today is so beautiful in giving us a good long term perspective on life. The Lord is not going to abandon us in our struggles and disappointments - whether self-induced or as part of the journey of the earthly life. **If we know that and believe that, we can get through anything that comes our way.** The successes of life we will be more grateful for and not take for granted; just like the failures & frustrations & disappointments will not crush us for good. **Yes, for a time they may get us down and we must re-focus.** Like when a loved one dies, it can knock us off track mentally & emotionally & sometimes even physically for months, sometimes years, but eventually if we regularly turn over our

sufferings in this regard to the Lord, He will not only help us, but will give us the grace to be an instrument of His kindness to others suffering in a similar way. The same goes for all the challenges of life: *dealing with addictions and mental illness, people away from the practice of the Faith, and in broken relationships.* As we get older, hopefully we get wiser in the Lord, as St. Paul notes about himself in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading today urging kindness and patience in trying to bring people to God and the ways of Faith, despite human weakness and stubbornness of mind and will in dealing with the evil of human slavery.

3. And then in the Gospel today **the Lord reminds us of that need for continual spiritual and sometimes actual detachment from the passing things of this life.** It's not an easy message to embrace for us naturally fearful humans, a very sad effect of sin in all of our minds and hearts and wills to a greater or lesser degree depending on how far we have gotten on the journey of holiness. This includes our relationships in all their beauty, and complexity and difficulty at times with our parents, our spouse, our children, our friends and neighbors and even people who may be our detractors/enemies (*although in light of eternity we have to try to love - or want what is spiritually best - for the people who dislike us or we dislike for whatever reason*). **Spiritual detachment** does not mean lack of love or being caring! What it really means is loving all people and things in God and not apart from Him. And submitting all to His Holy will. So sometimes our loved ones get very ill and frail as they get older. We would love for God to work a miracle and heal them physically, but in His wisdom oftentimes He uses sickness and frailty to get the person and hopefully their surrounding loved ones to rely on Him more and to unite those sufferings: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual with Jesus on the Cross and with our Lady of Sorrows to help the suffering person do some – if not all - **their Purgatory** here on earth and to offer - in charity & hopefully increasing patience - those sufferings as well for the souls who are in Purgatory now and for the conversion of all the hardened sinners in our families and in our world – per our Lady at Fatima. Then you can have inner peace and joy and realize more and more that our true home is not here in this passing world, but is with the Lord and Our Lady and all the good angels and saints of every time and place in Heaven. How beautiful it is – if we are not callous/indifferent to it – to see the shining light of God shine through the fragile ones of this world. God bless.