

Homily
Friday of the 4th Week of Lent
March 15, 2024

I remember my dad telling me what to do. I didn't like it. In fact, I rebelled and didn't do, initially, what he told me to do. And I paid the consequences. In school, I was told by my teachers what to read, what to write, what homework to complete and turn in, and I didn't like it. I rebelled, I procrastinated, until I eventually complied. My boss often, daily, tells me what to do. What is he thinking? I know how to do my job. I'll do what needs to be done. I don't need him directing me, until I realize I work for him. And I comply. My wife tells me what I need to do. Yes, dear! As you wish. I know better than to defy my wife and I comply. At least that is what I let her believe.

Who likes to be told what to do? Who thinks they know better and can direct their own lives without someone telling them what to do?

We have laws in our society that keep us safe. That's what civil society is all about; people living together, working together, being safe, happy and productive. Even then, I don't necessarily like all the laws I'm expected to obey.

In today's first reading from Wisdom, we hear of the wicked who don't like being told what to do. In fact, the wicked embrace doing their own thing, even when it goes against the 'Just One.' In fact, the wicked challenge the authority of the son of God, condemning him to a shameful death. They didn't look closely enough to realize the goodness of the one coming from God.

Do we do our own thing when it comes to God? Do we sometimes rebel and reject and ignore what is just and right and good in favor of what we deem just and right and good in our own eyes? Each time we do, we are rejecting what is holy. And often, we don't even realize it.

Jesus knew the Jews were conspiring to kill Him. But He kept focused on His mission. He continued to teach. And Jesus continues to teach us today. Are we listening?

As we continue our journey towards Easter, we remember our sinfulness, we repent, we pray, we reach out to those in need, and we look forward to the promise made by God, Who is all Good, all powerful, all merciful, all loving. And maybe we pause to look ever more closely at those things we do and say or don't do and don't say that defies God's Will, especially those things we don't realize. This is growth; this is conversion; this is the purpose of this season of Lent.

We are called in a special way today to realize our weakness and seek God the Father Who sent His only Son, our Brother, perfect, sinless and loving. It is Jesus Who takes away the sins of the world. And we, on our part, must recognize our sinfulness, reject those sins, give those sins to Him, die to self, pick up our cross daily and follow Him.