

Commentary to the 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B –



In Egypt, there has never been a code of laws. The very word “law” was unknown because the pharaoh, the incarnation of the god Ra, established, by his word, what was just and right. He—the Egyptian texts recalled—“takes advice from his heart, dictates to the scribe excellent provisions” and orders the courts to enforce “his words.”

Nothing like this happened in Israel, where the law was not of the king, but of God. The king had only the executive and judicial power. His task was to establish peace and justice in the country (Ps 72:1-2), ensuring that all observe the law of the Lord to which he himself was subjected. On the day of his coronation, he was given a copy of the Torah to meditate upon every day of his life (Dt 17:18-20), resisting the temptation to introduce changes or additions dictated by political opportunism and human cunning, so different from the wisdom of God.

He who, like the Pharaoh, alludes himself of being “wise like God” (Gen 3:5) and decides to manage his life with the wisdom of this world is condemned to failure. To him, though intelligent and cultured, the Bible denies the title of “wise” (Ps 14:1), because “true wisdom” manifests itself only where there is the “fear of the Lord” (Pro 1:7). The “religion of the lips” is a discovery of human wisdom, is a ploy

to mask the unfaithfulness to the Lord; only “that of the heart” is genuine, because it comes from the Word of God and is expressed in love.

To internalize the message, we repeat:

“Religion that is pure and faultless is this: to help the orphans and widows, and keep oneself free from the things of this world.”

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-8

Second Reading: James 1:17-18,21-22,27

Gospel: Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23

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