

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sir 15:15-20; Ps 119; 1 Cor 2:6-10; Mt 5:17-37
Commentary by Emilio G. Chávez

Presenting how one lives one's life as a choice between two ways is well-known in the Bible: "See, I put before you today life and the good and death and the bad," (Dt 30:15-20) and in ancient Christian literature (*Didache*, or "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"), which begins "There are two ways, one of life and one of death," and which goes on to describe this in terms very similar to our readings today. And it does seem that as we grow older and more set in our ways, our choices and the patterns we have fallen into or made for ourselves begin to manifest themselves ever more clearly as either tending to "life and the good" or "death and the bad."

The first reading from Sirach stresses our free will: it is our choice to choose good things, an honest life which builds up the community or a selfish, narrow-minded life which divides and helps create enmity in society and the world. The specific blueprint the author has in mind is the same as that of the psalmist: the Torah or "Law" of God as revealed to Moses on Sinai. This constituted wisdom for Israel, according to Dt 4:5-6. But for us Christians, God's wisdom was fully revealed in Christ. This was a wisdom hidden for ages, and is our gift from God in Christ. It is a wisdom revealed in a plan of salvation unimaginable: that God would take our human flesh and undo Adam's sin, by doing the opposite of Adam, who being a mere human being attempted to be a god. Christ, being in the form of God, humbled himself and took the form of a slave to the point of death on the cross, Phil 2:6-8. This is the wisdom of the "fullness of time" (Eph 1:1-10; Gal 4:1-7), for "mature" people. This is the wisdom, the wise way of thinking and behaving, explained in the Sermon on the Mount. It goes behind the letter of the Law to its root, the original will of God the creator many years before Sinai (see Gal 3:15-29). God had engaged in a pedagogic teaching process after Adam's fall and had chosen a people peculiar to himself from whom would come the "light of the nations" (Is 42:6; 49:6; Lk 2:32; Acts 13:44-49).

Jesus fulfills the Torah or Law of Moses: not a single little dot or mark of it went unfulfilled (see Lk 24:44; Rom 10:1-4). The Torah was God's revelation for how to

please Him, revealed gradually through the Prophets. But in the last days, God's will was revealed through his Son Jesus (Heb 1:1-4; Jn 8:28-29; Jn 10:17; 14:21).