

Trinity 9

(There are three choices of propers for each office this week) A Homilies are provided for Morning Prayer A and Evening Prayer A. Others are to be written.

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Ezek 14:1-11

Second Lesson: 1 Thess 4:1-12

Homily

'Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols

in their heart,

and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity

before their face:

should I be enquired of at all by them?"

Ezekiel was never one to mince words.

When some

of the most respected people in all Israel

came to him in his role as prophet,

seeking God's blessing on what they were doing,

they heard words they were not expecting

"these men have set up their idols in their heart,"

Were they bowing down before false gods?

Were they sacrificing at their altars?

Were they actually taking part in pagan worship?

Is that what this was all about?

Probably not.

In all likelihood these men were faithful

in the worship of the true God,

in His temple, by the rites He had commanded.

It is very unlikely

that they frequented pagan temples,

or that they offered pagan worship in their homes.

These were the elders,

the spiritual and temporal leaders,

the clergy, if you will.

Without a doubt their visible actions

merited the respect in which they were held.

"these men have set up their idols in their heart,"

What on earth could that mean?

Why would a prophet say that to respected leaders?

St. Paul, in the middle of his praises

for the Church in Thessalonica,

had this to say:

*"... ye know what commandments we gave you
by the Lord Jesus.*

... that ye should abstain from fornication:

That every one of you

should know how to possess his vessel

in sanctification and honour;

Not in the lust of concupiscence,

...That no man ... defraud his brother

in any matter:

*...For God hath not called us unto uncleanness,
but unto holiness.*

*He therefore that despiseth,
despiseth not man, but God ..."*

It's the same question the prophet asked,
"What is it that you value more than God?"

Whatever is elevated in our heart
above our desire to please Him,
that is an idol, a false God,
a refusal to acknowledge Him as Lord.

Is it the desires of the flesh?

Is it material prosperity?

Is it our own rights?

The popular song famously proclaimed,

"I had to do it my way..."

Whose way?

We've come here to worship,
or have we?

We need to ask that.

The God-sent prophet Ezekiel
spoke for God when he said
to those with idols in their hearts:

"... should I be enquired of at all by them?"

"Do I have to listen to those
who won't really worship Me?
Is it right that they should even ask?"

*"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,
and him only shalt thou serve,"*

is what Moses said,
and Jesus Himself quoted.

Perhaps we should ask ourselves
how far that is true of us,
and, perhaps,
when we realize how short we fall,
we should admit it,
and beg forgiveness,
before we ask for anything else.

What idols are in my heart?

Let us pray.

Lord, open my eyes that I may see my own failure,
that I may know what it is that I place before thee,
that I may identify the idols that I am serving,
and help me to cast them aside.

Forgive me, direct my heart and mind and life,
that I may serve thee with a pure heart,
that I may come before thee in holiness,
and that I may dwell with thee forever,

O loving and almighty Father,
through Jesus Christ, thine only-begotten Son,
in whose Cross is my salvation,
who liveth and reigneth
with thee and the Holy Spirit,
now and forever. Amen.

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Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Wisdom 11:21-12:2

Second Lesson: John 8:1-11

Homily to be written

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Morning Prayer C

First Lesson: Gen 28:10-22

Second Lesson: 2 Cor 9

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Prov 4:1-4, 20-27

Second Lesson: Heb 12:1-13

Homily

There's a wonderful line in the film
"Fiddler on the Roof"

*"Because of our traditions,
every one of us knows who he is,
and what God expects us to do"*

Tradition.

What is tradition?

The word comes from the Latin,
and simply means, "What is handed along".

How do we learn to speak?

How do we learn the thousand things
we need to know to get along in the world?

Where do good manners come from?

How, in fact, do we learn anything at all?

And, especially,

how do we learn about God,

and about what it is that He expects of us,

and what it is that he intends to do for us?
Tradition.

Someone told us,
and someone told them,
and they heard it from someone else,
and so on, all the way back to the source.
Tradition.

We read this in the Book of Proverbs:

*Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father,
and attend to know understanding.*

*For I give you good doctrine,
forsake ye not my law.*

*For I was my father's son,
tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.*

He taught me also, and said unto me,

Let thine heart retain my words:

keep my commandments, and live.

Tradition.

It's the way it works.

It's the way God designed it to work.

Knowledge, whether of things or of God,
doesn't just lie around in plain sight

where just anyone can find it all by himself.

A generation learns something,

perhaps by figuring it out the hard way,

perhaps by revelation,

and that generation teaches what it has learned
to the next,

and the next teaches it to the one after that,
and so on until we have heard and learned.

Tradition.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews

we hear of a great cloud of witnesses.

Who are they?

These are the saints who have gone before.

These are those who have learned timeless truth.

These are those

who have handed that truth on to others.

These are the giants on whose shoulders we stand.

Tradition.

They have witnessed the truth we now hold,

and have handed it on to us,

and they now witness our struggles

as we labor on.

and judged, by tradition

and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost,

which traditions were real,

and which should become the Bible.

And how did you come to have a Bible

to read, to hear, and to believe?

Someone put it in your hand.

Tradition.

And there are hundreds of different ways
in which the Scriptures are interpreted.

How do we know which interpretation is right?

We listen to what those before us have said,

we pay attention to our teachers,

from the early Fathers right along to now,

to the pattern of interpretation

that has been handed down from one to another

for generation after generation.

Tradition.

We come together to worship week after week.

How do we know how to do that?

Someone taught us,

and someone taught them.

Tradition.

Tradition is sometimes overwhelming

in its beauty,

but it is not always pleasant.

Sometimes it seems limiting.

Sometimes we'd rather do things differently.

Sometimes we'd prefer

to believe something different,

or to interpret Scripture all by ourselves,

and tradition holds us back.

The past is part of us,

and we are part of the past,

as we carry tradition into the future.

We, very rightly, regard the Bible
 as the only absolutely sure testimony
 to the revelation of God,
 and as the ultimate judge of all our doctrine
 and all our practice,
 but how do we come to have a Bible?
 The words God intended us to hear
 were passed down,
 sometimes by word of mouth,
 and sometimes in written form,
 from one generation to the next.
 The Church listened
 to the tradition they had received,
 Sometimes we stray a bit into doing things
 in the way that pleases us most,
 and tradition puts the brakes on.
 Hebrews, as we heard,
 went on to speak of the chastening
 a father sometimes needs to give to a son,
 and how that chastening is sometimes unpleasant,
 seldom really welcomed,
 but how it turns out to be what we need,
 and how we can receive comfort from knowing that.
 There is security in knowing one's limits.
 Tradition
 Hebrews goes on to say this:

*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down,
 and the feeble knees;
 And make straight paths for your feet,
 lest that which is lame be turned out of the way;
 but let it rather be healed.*

Tradition.

Let us pray.

Lord God of our fathers, who hast raised up a great
 cloud of witnesses and hast thereby shown to us the
 way of salvation, grant that we may so preserve and
 heed what thou hast given us, that we may boldly
 proclaim thy Word, and faithfully deliver it to the
 generations to come. Through him of whom tradition
 speaketh, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth
 and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one
 God, world without end. Amen.

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Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Lam 3:40-58

Second Lesson: Luke 15:11-32

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer C

First Lesson: 1 Sam 31

Second Lesson: Acts 13:1-3, 14-31, 38, 44-49

Homily to be written