

## *Ordinary Time 15C 2016*

### *It's Not Complicated*

There are times when life can be complicated. And sometimes we make it more complicated than it is. This is especially true of religion. For example, our Catholic faith can seem very complicated, filled as it is with so many rules and regulations. But faith is not supposed to be that way. Faith in God and trust in Jesus Christ is simple and pure, and when we make it complicated something is wrong.

Consider today's first reading in which Moses explains God's Law to the people of Israel. For many of the people the Law of Moses was complicated and frightening. But Moses assures them that the Law of God he is giving them is not mysterious or remote from them. It is something very near. It is on their lips and in the heart. All they need do is obey God's voice. *It's not complicated.*

The Psalm Response we sang today makes a similar point: "Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live." Again, *it's not complicate.* If we turn to God, we will live. If we turn away from God, we will not. *It's not complicated.* The secret of life is already in our heart and on our lips; it is very close to us.

In today's gospel a scholar of the law wants to know what he must do to inherit eternal life; and Jesus asks him what is written in the Law. When the scholar responds correctly, Jesus replies: "Do this and you will live." It is as simple

as that; *it's not complicated*. But Jesus' answer is too simple for the scholar; it must be more complicated than that. And so he asks: "And who is my neighbor." Is my neighbor the person who lives next to me, the one who is like me, my fellow countrymen? Jesus answers with the parable of the Good Samaritan. *It's not complicated*; your neighbor is anyone in need; anyone who needs your help; anyone you can help. *It's not complicated*.

Finally, in today's second reading, St. Paul tells us who Jesus is: He is the visible image of the invisible God; he is the Head of the body that is the Church; he is the one in whom the fullness of God is pleased to dwell. *It's not complicated*; Jesus is the one who gives meaning and purpose to our life because he is God's presence in our midst. Whether we know it or not, he is the one we have been looking for our whole life long. He is the one who shows us who we are. *It's not complicated*.

I spent a good part of my life in academia, reading theology, studying the scriptures, writing books and articles, and teaching college and graduate students. I suppose I have as good an understanding of Catholicism as most people. But looking back I often wonder if I have made my faith more complicated than it is.

Faith in God should be simple and uncomplicated because it is so important to us. We should be able explain it to others in a few sentences. My faith in God is faith in Jesus Christ, the one who has come into the world to give me life. My faith

teaches me that everything is a gift from God: creation, my life, my salvation. My faith teaches me there is nothing I have that is not God's gift to me. And so I try to live in trusting faith in a way that responds to this wonderful gift of grace and life in Jesus. It's simple. *It's not complicated!*