

MINISTRY OF PRAISE

REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.” ~ Reinhold Niebuhr

The month of September is a time filled with changes. The sultry days of summer become the clear, cool days of autumn. Green leaves change to red, yellow, and brown. This year, due to the Coronavirus, every aspect of daily life has seen dramatic changes. Even “Back-to-School” routines are different: some students will learn online; others, in person with safety protocols; and others, a blend of both options. Change is never easy; yet how we adapt to change is vital to our sense of well-being. The theme of change is beautifully expressed in the “Serenity Prayer.” First, we ask God to give us the “serenity to accept the things I cannot change.” We want to be calm in the face of anything in life which simply cannot be altered. Although we may not like it, some things, like the pandemic, are just “given” and are not really open to change. Next, we ask God for “the courage to change the things I can.” Often we may need to be brave and confident in order to do our best in the face of necessary changes. For example, we ask for courage to be willing to accept the changes in our lifestyle which need to be made if we want to stop the spread of Covid-19. The most challenging part of the prayer is the final phrase in which we ask God for “the wisdom to know the difference.” Having certainty about what can and what cannot be changed is wisdom indeed!

During his lifetime, Jesus often distinguished between the changeable and the unchangeable in his teachings. In the gospel of Matthew (Mt 13: 52), Jesus praised the good householder who “brings from his storeroom both the new

and the old.” Here Jesus recognized the value of continuity as well as change. Jesus viewed many of the legalities of the Jewish religion during his time as subject to change. He courageously healed on the Sabbath; and his disciples picked grain on the Sabbath. Jesus would not condemn or stone the woman caught in adultery. He conversed at length and alone with the woman at the well, who was a scorned Samaritan! He angrily drove the money-changers out of the Temple, teaching that God’s house is a place of prayer, not of financial dealings. All of these Scriptural episodes, and many more, show that Jesus possessed the wisdom to know what can be changed. However, Jesus also taught, and lived out, the one “rule” that could not be changed: Love of God and love of neighbor. We should practice this unchangeable commandment as we respond to the poor, the immigrants, the outcasts, and those affected by racial prejudice in our day. During September, in the midst of Covid-19, let us reflect upon this theme of change, praying for “the wisdom to know the difference.”

+++In my life today, what cannot be changed?

+++In my life today, what can be changed?

+++How can I gain “the wisdom to know the difference?”

PRAYER AND PRAISE INTENTIONS

+++Let us pray that we will experience serenity by accepting whatever cannot be changed in our lives today.

+++Let us pray that we will have the courage to adapt to whatever needs changing during this difficult time.

+++Let us pray that we will strive for the wisdom to recognize what can and cannot be changed.

+++Let us pray for all students as they experience the changes of a new school year amidst Covid-19.

Praying for serenity, courage, and wisdom with you,
The Blessed Sacrament Parish Community