

March 31, 2017

Wis 2:1a, 12-22

PS 34:17-21, 23

Jn 7: 1-2, 10, 25-30

I am sure we have all heard or even used the phrase “goody two shoes”—said often when someone appears better than us, a more prayerful person, a more forgiving person or just someone who can do things better than we can. This is a symptom of jealousy, a refusal to acknowledge our faults, or even as the “wicked” in the first reading, reveling in their faults as a badge of strength and honor. When we read those words, can we use them as an examination of conscience? Can we see the faults and failings of the wicked in our own lives, our relationships with our family, friends and neighbors? If we do recognize them, are we prodded to change our attitudes and our lives?

The psalmist speaks of the love and gentleness of the Lord, how he cares for those at the hands of the wicked. The one who suffers most is in need of the most love and is loved and protected by the Lord.

Can we believe that Jesus feared for his life so much that he would avoid attending the Festival of Booths, one of the three festivals that required a pilgrimage to the temple? Or, in a way, was he protecting his disciples since they might be arrested simply by association with him? He proceeds to the festival alone, as in secret. He goes midway through the festival week and begins to teach in the temple area. Once again, he is challenging the leaders but again they fail to understand him and question his authority. The people recognize the hypocrisy of the leaders because they know the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees want to kill him but were not able to seize him because his hour had not yet come.

**Reflection questions:**

What in my Lenten journey has and is still helping me to move beyond self-righteousness to the comfort of God’s love?

Have my prayers, fasting and almsgiving enabled me to speak for good and against evil without fear?

*Reflection by Deacon Greg Fabian, St. Matthias Parish.*