

Homily: The Lack of Godly Wisdom Sows Disunity

**25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
James 3:16-4:3**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, we are invited to reflect deeply on the words of St. James in his letter to the early Christian community. He presents us with a challenging truth that we often see play out in our own lives: where there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there is disorder and every kind of evil practice. These words should give us pause because they point to a crucial spiritual reality: the absence of godly wisdom leads to disunity and division, not only in our communities but also within our own hearts.

St. James highlights two very different types of wisdom. The first, earthly wisdom, is marked by jealousy and selfish ambition, and we know how easy it is to fall into this mindset. It's the wisdom that tells us to focus on ourselves, to look out for our own interests, and to compete with others to get ahead. We see this in our world today, in the workplace, in politics, in families, and sadly, even in our churches. This wisdom, however, sows seeds of division. It stirs up conflict, because where selfish ambition reigns, there is no room for peace.

James contrasts this with godly wisdom, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits. It's the wisdom that comes from above and reflects the very nature of God. This wisdom does not seek to elevate the self but looks outward, seeking the good of others. It creates unity because it is not concerned with personal gain but with service, compassion, and reconciliation.

Disunity in Our Hearts and Communities

How often do we allow earthly wisdom to take root in our own hearts? When we put our desires and ambitions above the needs of others, we inevitably sow disunity. Our relationships suffer, as does our relationship with God. James says very clearly that when we ask for things with the wrong motives — to fulfill our own desires — we do not receive because our hearts are not aligned with God's will.

But this disunity isn't only external; it begins within each of us. When we live according to selfish ambition, we are constantly at war with ourselves, trying to satisfy desires that never truly fulfill us. This inner conflict spills over into our interactions with others. We become more focused on competition than collaboration, more concerned with being right than being righteous, and more invested in winning than in serving.

The Wisdom of the Cross

In the Gospel today, we hear the disciples arguing about who among them is the greatest. Jesus, knowing their hearts, teaches them a lesson that cuts right to the core of this issue. He takes a child and places him in their midst. The child, in Jesus' time, represented the least, the most

vulnerable, someone without status or influence. Jesus tells his disciples, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.”

This is the wisdom of God: to serve, to humble ourselves, to put others before ourselves. It is the wisdom of the Cross. Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. He is the ultimate example of godly wisdom, showing us that greatness is found not in power or prestige, but in humility, sacrifice, and love.

Called to Unity Through Godly Wisdom

As Christians, we are called to be peacemakers, to sow seeds of unity rather than division. This is only possible when we embrace godly wisdom and reject the selfish ambitions that lead to disunity. It is a wisdom that comes from prayer, from a heart that seeks to align itself with God’s will, and from a desire to live in harmony with others.

Let us ask ourselves today: What kind of wisdom are we living by? Are we driven by selfish ambition, by a need to prove ourselves, or by a desire for personal gain? Or are we allowing godly wisdom to guide our thoughts and actions — a wisdom that seeks peace, mercy, and the good of others?

Let us pray for the grace to embrace the wisdom that comes from above, so that our lives may be a reflection of God's peace and love. May we become agents of unity in a world so often divided by ambition, jealousy, and conflict. And may our hearts be conformed to the heart of Christ, who showed us the true path to greatness: the path of humble service.

Amen.