

## **Homily – Thursday of the 28th Week in Ordinary Time – Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Antioch – Red Mass – October 17, 2024**

Esteemed legal professionals, dear friends, today's Gospel reading speaks to the tension between the letter of the law and the wisdom that should guide its application. I suspect that, for legal professionals, there is a great sense of relief when you can apply the clear parameters of the law. When the law is well defined, the role of interpretation becomes simpler. But the moments when discretion is required, when judgment must stretch beyond the written word — these moments can be the most challenging. How do we seek wisdom to guide our decisions in these spaces?

The Pharisees in the Gospel had a different struggle. Rather than humbly submitting to God's wisdom, and allowing it to guide their actions, they acted as if the law were their possession. They took pride not in the justice or mercy the law should foster, but in the power the law gave them. They forgot that their expertise and their positions of authority were meant to serve others, not themselves. This is a temptation that can challenge anyone in a position of power or influence, including legal professionals.

The relief we seek from making the right judgments comes from a deeper source: the wisdom of God. As St. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Ephesians, we have been chosen from the foundation of the world to live in the wisdom of Christ. It is a wisdom that calls us to go beyond appearances and to discern the truth. And as Pope Francis has said: *"True wisdom demands an encounter with reality."* It is a wisdom that offers peace to the heart, even in the face of difficult decisions, because it is rooted in

the love and mercy of God, in whom reality finds its ultimate meaning.

Today, as we celebrate the feast of St. Ignatius of Antioch, we remember his wisdom and courageous witness. He, too, exemplified the wisdom that comes from God, facing persecution and death with steadfast faith, trusting in God's greater plan. His life, just like St. Thomas More's, reminds us to remain faithful to truth and justice, even when it requires great personal sacrifice.

As you continue your vital work in the legal profession, remember that you do not carry the burden of judgment alone. God's wisdom is always available, offering you guidance, clarity, and peace. Unlike the Pharisees, who turned the law into a tool for their own gain, may you find in the law a path to serve the greater good — offering justice, compassion, and righteousness to those who seek it.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe continue to guide you to her Son, and may the grace He offers us guide you in all your endeavors.