

Friday, June 5, 2020

The wisdom from above

- Pastor Hank French

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace (James 3:17-18).

Earlier this week I quoted James 1:5: "If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you." Today's text, also from James, describes the "wisdom from above" as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy."

Given the state of political and civil discourse in our country at the present time, there doesn't seem to be much wisdom around. Partiality and hypocrisy? Too much. Purity, peaceableness, gentleness, a willingness to yield, mercy and good fruits? Too little.

Or so it may seem to those who don't (or won't) look beyond the nastiness to find signs that the wisdom from above is on display all around. Have you seen the pictures on TV every morning this last week of ordinary, peaceable people cleaning up the rubble left by a night of rioting? A demonstration of the wisdom from above.

Did you hear about the Episcopal priests in front of St. John's Church, across the street from the White House, handing out water and snacks to peaceful protesters and praying for and with them? Mercy. Another demonstration of the wisdom from above. And the peaceful protesters? Another demonstration of the wisdom from above as they draw the nation's attention to the systemic sin of racism.

Did you see the picture Sue posted on our Facebook page of the pop-up food shelf at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, distributing food to those affected by the riots and the looting of local grocery stores? Mercy and Good fruits. Another demonstration of the wisdom from above. And all that food? Donated by ordinary folks. More mercy and good fruits. Gentleness and peaceableness. More demonstrations of the wisdom from above.

I could go on, but the point is clear. Look beyond the nastiness and you will find holiness. And there is the basis for my optimism that the wisdom from above will overcome the ignorance from below.

Prayer: Holy God, giver of wisdom, thank you for the ordinary saints who quietly go about doing good while others noisily go about doing bad. Amen.