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Memorial of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, Priest

Date: Monday, September 23, 2024 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** B
First Reading: Proverbs 3:27–34
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 15:2–4b, 5 | **Response:** Psalm 15:1
Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 5:16
Gospel Reading: Luke 8:16–18
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

Today's first reading is taken from the Book of Proverbs, a beautiful example of "wisdom literature." Here, wisdom isn't abstract or theoretical—it's practical guidance for living well. Proverbs teaches us how to act with justice and compassion, especially toward our neighbours. In today's passage, we hear clear instructions, such as:

> "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act." (Pr 3:27) "Do not say to your neighbour, 'Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you,' when you already have it with you." (Pr 3:28)

These are calls to generosity and integrity, qualities that build trust and foster community. This practical wisdom reminds us that faith is lived out in concrete acts of kindness and justice.

This message is echoed in today's Responsorial Psalm, taken from Psalm 15. The refrain, "The just will live in the presence of the Lord" (Ps 15:1), captures the heart of wisdom—right living leads to communion with God. The Psalm itself expands on this idea, describing the qualities of the one who dwells in the Lord's presence:

> "The one who walks blamelessly and does justice, who thinks the truth in his heart and slanders not with his tongue" (Ps 15:2-3).

These verses show us that justice, integrity, and honesty are central to our relationship with God. It's not enough to avoid doing wrong; we are called to actively pursue what is good and just. Like the Proverbs reading, this Psalm reminds

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us that true wisdom is shown in our actions—our daily choices to be honest, fair, and compassionate.

As we celebrate the Feast of Padre Pio today, we are given a model of someone who lived this kind of practical wisdom. Padre Pio was known for his deep prayer life, his powerful intercession, and his commitment to the sacrament of reconciliation. But just as important was his simple, everyday kindness toward the people who came to him. He lived out the wisdom we hear in the readings today—helping those in need, speaking truth, and offering compassion. His light, like the one Jesus speaks of in today's Gospel, was not hidden but shone brightly for all to see.

In the Gospel from Luke, Jesus teaches us with another piece of proverbial wisdom:

> "No one who lights a lamp conceals it with a vessel or sets it under a bed, but rather places it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light."

This image calls us to be bold in living out our faith. Just as a lamp is meant to give light to a room, our lives are meant to reflect the light of Christ to others. Our faith cannot remain private or hidden. Like Padre Pio, we are called to let our actions—our love, kindness, and integrity—shine for the world to see.

As we reflect on these readings, let us ask ourselves: Are we holding back from doing good when it is in our power to help? Are we living with integrity and kindness, as God urges us to do in holy scripture in the books of Proverbs the Psalms? And, like Padre Pio, are we allowing the light of Christ to shine through us in all that we do?

May we go forth from here today inspired by the wisdom of Scripture and the example of Padre Pio. Let us strive to live as just and compassionate neighbours, letting our light shine brightly in a world that so desperately needs it.

Amen.

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