

Organ: Titelouze  
(Supraphon)

V.O. ANGELUS

1 Cor 1<sup>26-31</sup> ["Adornat"]

That passage of scripture is from the 1<sup>st</sup> letter of St Paul to the Corinthians. It is the second of the three scripture readings of Next Sunday, the 5<sup>th</sup> after Epiphany and second before Lent begins. Today in our prayers I should like to consider briefly the three readings from scripture which you'll hear on Sunday, so that they won't be entirely unfamiliar, and that we may have an opportunity of meditating on them beforehand. St Paul begins his letter to Corinth by upbraiding the Christian community there (gently, though) for their divisions and bickering - and, with a touch of irony, deflating their pride and partisanship about the men who brought their faith to them, recalling them to an attitude of humility, modesty and gratitude. Because they were Greeks, in an age of foreign domination, materialism and cult of <sup>elite</sup> mystery religions, some of them may have been looking on their Christianity as making them a cut above other people; some of them evidently complained about Paul's lack of polish as a speaker, expecting the truth from good rhetorical style. Many of them, perhaps, had the Greek respect for wisdom, philosophy and rational argument. What St Paul emphatically says is that Christ, God's wisdom, ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> not the wisdom of the world - God's plan of salvation doesn't depend on human wisdom or philosophy or points of view; in fact, lest it might seem so, He appears to have chosen a way which, to reveal human thinking, is stupidity, folly, weakness.

The grace of God, the ability to come to Him and be one with Him, doesn't depend at all on how wise or educated or important or strong or influential a man may be. The wisdom of God is what we have to learn - and Christ is the wisdom of God: His way to making us free and bringing us into His love, is the way of the cross, which, with Lent coming up very soon, will be the fruitful subject of our meditation as we try to learn the wisdom of God. His word, our receiving of it, and living in accordance with it, does not come through lofty or polished human language, through the efforts of our own thinking and reasoning; it is a revelation, to be accepted in intellectual humility. As St Paul points out in another letter, all the wisdom in the world doesn't lead a man to accept God's word. There's another point Paul makes to the Corinthians: the wisdom of God is not given to an esoteric elite, a kind of secret society of Christians, but to all who have received and try to live their Christian life and thought to the full. As Sunday's gospel recalls, all of us are to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, to bring all mankind to acknowledge and praise our Father in Heaven.

MUSIC - PRAYERS - JER. 9<sup>23-24</sup>

The Prophet, Jeremiah; the Old Testament reading for next Sunday. Again, it's the wisdom of God which is the theme, that wisdom which is His revelation of Himself. For the people of the O.T. that revelation, and salvation, was the Law of God.

That's why the Law was so important then. But with the appearance of Christ among us, He is the final and fullest revelation and salvation — it's in Him that God's wisdom is found. He didn't come to abolish the law or the prophets (with their constant message of recall to living God's law) — he came, as He said, rather to complete them, give them their fullness: "I tell you solemnly, till heaven & earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved." This is the gospel message we'll listen to on Sunday. Christ, who is God, is our Law, the yardstick to measure of lives and thinking by, in accordance with those ideas and message we must conform ourselves if the wisdom of God is to be in us. He gave the interior spirit of love of a Father, and charity towards all men, to the letter of God's law and revelation. And Christ's own life was lived in accordance with that spirit and law — of love and obedience to His father, obedience which led to His death on the cross. This is the way we will find Him, during Lent, and by being with Him, learn the wisdom of God which is our salvation.

Ans 1