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24 Wednesday

WEDNESDAY, Week 25 of Year

Proverbs 30: 5 – 9  
Ps 119: 105/29,72,89,101,104,163  
Luke 9: 1 - 6

The book of Proverbs is one of the Bible's 'Wisdom' books, expressing for the people of Israel the wisdom of God Himself and how His people ought to live their lives. It contains a lot of common-sense wisdom which sometimes may appear as very 'ordinary'. You might even wonder why some of its sayings are counted as 'inspired', and truly the word of God. But God speaks through words that are human, and through human feelings and experiences. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit operates also in us as we listen or read, giving new depth and meaning to the 'ordinary' in our lives. So (as St Paul said) every word of sacred scripture is useful for our instruction and for building up our Christian lives. But in today's first reading we also find a warning not to add our own additions to God's word, something we can at times easily do, in effect making our own interpretation of the word ( the opposite of another tendency we have, of ignoring 'inconvenient' bits of the scriptures ).

In today's reading, the author begs two favours of God, which closely parallel Solomon's beautiful prayer for wisdom (in the Book of Wisdom). Asking for neither poverty nor riches but only what's really necessary, he's asking for God's will to prevail, not his own. A good, and wise, reminder for our modern affluent and consumer societies that indeed there's a danger in being surrounded by plenty, a danger of ignoring God altogether. The other danger, of profaning God's name and His law, through being driven by poverty and destitution is also a real one, but perhaps less immediate or indeed harmful.