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If you read the newspapers – or, in today’s world, go on-line – there’s a lot of doom and gloom out there! Mass killings in Colorado - again. The worst mid-west drought in a quarter of a century. Gridlock in the other Washington. West Nile virus killing dozens in Texas. Wars all over the place. Children starving to death in Africa.

And on top of it all, we have cultural change at an unprecedented rate, which leaves a sense of uncertainty about the future.

It certainly seems as if we’ve been cursed with living in “interesting times”, doesn’t it?!

Do you think this is new? That’s it’s never been like this before? I’ve heard folk say this. But I don’t think it’s true.

Well, yes AND no...but mostly no.

The truth is that physical disasters are a common, permanent feature of life. In fact much of the language of physical disasters in the bible could as easily be applied to our contemporary world.

So could the feeling of uncertainty, that the world is going to hell in a handbasket, be said to be a universal feature of the human condition.

In fact, every culture and nation is confronted at all times with the experience of disasters, uncertainty, and change, and those will always be challenging: because a part of all of it is uncomfortable, confusing, and, not always positive.

That makes living in a black-and-white world pretty tricky. Yet we demand it of our politicians, and they give it to us. We demand it in our justice system and it gives it to us. The reality of life through all ages is that it is frequently ambiguous, quite a bit more complex than we want to acknowledge, and the seeking simple solutions to such complex realities is most likely to be quite futile. We’re called to get beyond this, to forget looking for someone to blame and to take responsibility for being part of the solution.

Today’s readings echo some of these very concerns about the way we’re living today. And they offer an alternative way of approaching life - one which isn’t destructive but constructive, isn’t life-denying but rather affirms the essential goodness of humanity.

The excerpt from Proverbs is part of a passage that speaks of the true “wisdom” of faith as compared with the flawed wisdom of the secular world. This true wisdom is so much more spectacular and valuable than the other wisdom. It is a thing of great beauty, like a huge house with a magnificent edifice with 7 pillars. It’s a thing of value, it feeds minds, much as a great feast would feed the body. And Wisdom has prepared this feast to attract the simple and offers the gift of insight to those who are people of faith. This gift of wisdom is contrasted elsewhere in Proverbs with the wisdom of the world that is destructive of community and of personal

integrity.

It's this wisdom of faith that the author is proclaiming in Ephesians.. "Watch out," he warns them, "The world is a sick place- don't be pulled in!" The days are evil. The safest place is among your brother and sister Christians. And the safest thing to do is to share in active expressions of faith as part of a community. When he says this he's echoing the words from today's psalm: "Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." We all know that the world can indeed be an evil place if we're not prepared for it. We can all think of things that we have seen that we would call evil. If we're not grounded in faith and bound together with the bonds of baptism we can be overcome by the raw negative power that these stories embody.

Today's readings also reinforce the importance of a focused and thoughtful way of living that is the true wisdom of faith. We are called to place our Christian community at the center of our lives, and being part of that community invites us to interpret the world we see around us in light of the faith of that community - through the sacred texts, through the long centuries of reflection, through the shared experience of believers, through the sacrifice of martyrs, and the witness of the Saints.

And, most importantly, we're being called to interpret our world through the experience of worship. Every week we hear language of thanksgiving for each other, for creation, and for the gift of forgiveness embodied and symbolized by Jesus. We hear readings from the Bible about that story, and especially from the Gospels, which focus on Jesus. Today's collect reminds us that Jesus is the source of guidance and inspiration that we must rely upon if we are to make the journey of faith together through our contemporary world. Because, it says, Jesus is an example of Godly life; in him we see the wisdom of God. We cannot fall if we follow in his footsteps and live by his example.

If worship is the central way we become a community then repeating the Last Supper is the central act of worship. That's what we see in today's Gospel. What John wrote represents probably at least 75 years of reflection on the meaning of the Last Supper. The Early Church came to recognize it's central importance in the life of the Church. Without Eucharist, they came to realize, they would flounder, they would not have life in any meaningful sense. They wanted us to know this. John and his Christian community are reminding us that the focal point of our lives as members of the Body of Christ is when we come together to share the common meal, when we continue to share in "the breaking of the bread and in the prayers". This is our place of common identity. It is the source of eternal life, and unless we share together in this meal then we can have no life in us in any real sense of the word.

Doing this is how we can make it to tomorrow. And by "tomorrow" I don't mean the day after today. "Tomorrow" for us as Christians means more an indefinite time in the future when dreams are fulfilled. "Tomorrow" in this sense goes by another name: the Kingdom of God. We are all working for - journeying toward - that 'tomorrow', sustained by the bread and wine we share today. It doesn't insulate us from the vagaries of this world, but it helps us make it through those vagaries, through the droughts and the killings

