

Heavenly vs. Earthly Perspective Fifth Week of Lent Tuesday, April 8, 2014 8:15 AM
Nm 21:4-9; **Jn 8:21-30** (Jesus is trying to show people what they do not know.)

In these readings from John's Gospel, **Jesus is gradually separating himself from what had become Judaism.** It's not that he is anti-Semitic or that he has anything against Jewish people, but rather **he has got something against some of the components of the religious heritage.**

In this case, it isn't first and foremost the Law, although he has quite a few conflicts with interpretations of Law. But here it's not quite the same thing. He is contrasting being from above with being from below, if you will: **a heavenly perspective versus an earthly perspective.** He is complaining that the whole orientation and the perspective of the people and of the teachers really is too earthy. It's looking at things too much through the senses, through what you could call, if you want, common sense and practical issues, where that's really not where he is coming from.

He is trying to elevate people's vision. He is trying to show people what they do not know. And he is getting nothing but push back. He is getting arguments. He is getting hostility. He is getting attitude, a superior attitude, an "I know" attitude. Well, how does anyone grow with an "I know already" attitude? One does not. How does one grow when one is superior? One doesn't. So in a way, what has happened is **people have developed for themselves a point of view that has trapped them**—trapped them—imprisoned them, into a situation **where they are not going to grow and they are not going to develop.** This is actually tragic. **It's tragic mostly because it's all done in the name of God.** But it could only happen when **people don't know God.** And that's Jesus' point: "I only do what the one who sent me tells me to do, one you do not know."