

- A. 1985 Robert Bellah (Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, Steven Tipton) wrote *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*
- concern: people withdrawing from the greater society into the circle of their family and friends ... immersed in private economic affairs, less and less involvement in public affairs
 - concern: that there is a moral confusion and a spiritual vacuum affecting our community obligations and public responsibility
 - concern: need to use our freedom to serve the common good ... foster family life, religious traditions, local politics ... morally coherent life.
- B. Jesus makes reference in the Gospel to the importance of the heart
- quotes Isaiah: people honor God with their lips, hearts are not in that worship = vain
 - that it is from within that good or evil reside
 - Moses too challenges his people and us to give evidence of wisdom and intelligence
 - St. James: speaks of pure, undefiled religion as caring for the afflicted
 - these are all heart issues: what goes on inside of us
- C. Habits of Christian Heart
1. Obedience: to listen attentively to God's word ... art of recognizing God's voice
... James: doers of the word not hearers only ... E.g., receptionist who recognized the voices of sales reps.
 - "Our Father" ... thy will be done (in that is our peace)
 - to act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly in faith
 - E.g.: St. Paul: on that road to Damascus ... heard and responded
 2. Hospitality: making room in our life for the other
 - warm welcome of God ... we call that faith
 - availability; not self-preoccupied
 - welcome to a new neighbor ... friendliness
 - E.g.: foreign exchange students ... give them a home
 3. Gratitude: count our blessings / give thanks / eucharistic community
 - take nothing for granted
 - gifts upon gifts: our freedom, education, friendship, our creation / redemption
 - E.g.: SNC new library: generosity of so many ... deep gratitude
- D. Habits: two different directions: bad habits = vices / good habits – virtues
In a culture of individualism, we are challenged to form good habits that commit us to the common good and the building of God's kingdom.
At Eucharist, called to the habit of obedience, hospitality, and gratitude;
at Eucharist, given the grace to foster those good habits.