

## August 19, 2018

Prv 9:1-6; Eph 5:15-20; Jn 6:51-58

What is Wisdom? It is an ability to see the underlying realities, to know that things are not always as they appear, to understand that not every perspective is correct. However, for a thought to be wise it must be firmly grounded in truth and reality. We would not think the person who has profound thoughts and unique interpretations that prove to be wrong is a “wise” person - this is more the definition of a “crackpot” - one who sees what others do not see, and understands what others do not understand - but in the end it’s not true! True wisdom then is an ability to see beyond the obvious realities to grasp the profound truth that lies beneath.

There are many so-called “wisdoms” of the world, yet one wisdom of God which is based in the one true reality of God. St Paul says in the first letter to the Corinthians: *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God.* (1 Cor 3:19a). He understood that many people were coming up with their own versions of the truth that contradict each other and do not line up with the revelation of God. He says that this is foolish, not wise. The Christian must grow in the true Wisdom of God which is revealed in Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us that he is *the way, the truth, and the life*, and St. Paul tells us in the first letter to the Corinthians that Jesus is *the power and wisdom of God*. There is a deep wisdom in Jesus which is beyond what the world in general, or any one person alone, can grasp.

We heard in the second reading: *Watch carefully how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most of the opportunity ... Therefore do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord.* The more we can understand the true wisdom of God, the more it will be clear how we are to act to bring about the promotion of justice and peace on this earth - and achieve eternal salvation. St. Paul was mainly speaking to some of the Christians who were losing track of the deeper truths in their quest to reach some sort of human ideal - defining wisdom for themselves, and ignoring the teachings that Paul had handed down. This tendency - so popular today - to apply the rules of the latest human philosophies and cultural movements to the realities of God - eventually leads to drifting out of sync with the mind of God.

How do we stay in sync with the mind of God? First, we must have faith in the truths that have been handed down to us. The Wisdom of God is present in these, their gradual unfolding shows a deep wisdom to those who in faith believe. Second we must apply these truths - and not

the changing values of the world - to our lives. We have to realize that in order to reach wisdom and wise action we need something more than the changing whims of those with the loudest voice or the most votes - we even need more than the limited vision that any one person has.

In the Gospel we see the unwise who lack such faith and can't understand what Jesus is saying about giving himself as food to eat. They ask: *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* They don't see beyond the appearances of the man before them to know that - in a way that only the wise can see - Jesus is God himself and the personification of all wisdom - what he is saying are not the ravings of a crackpot, they are the revelation of God. They may not be in line with the popular view of the time, but they come from a more profound wisdom. The invitation to accept this wisdom is available for anyone who truly seeks it. We heard in the first reading: *To the one who lacks understanding she says, Come eat of my food ... advance in the way of understanding.* In this reading Wisdom is depicted as a woman setting a table with meat and wine that all who approach in faith may share. In the Gospel, Jesus shows himself to be the fulfillment of these words of God, Jesus is the food and drink of the banquet of wisdom from the first reading. Jesus speaks of the necessity of feeding on him, and speaks of the plan of God to commune with his people through this meal: *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him ... the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.*

Over the centuries, the Church that Jesus put in place has been guarding and preaching the truths contained in that font of wisdom. It is the Church's responsibility to guard God's truth from the many false philosophies that come up from the world. The Church must also guard against the unwise things that arise within. It is because of the inexcusable faults and harm caused by some of its ministers, that the Church put in place (in the early 2000's) new rules to guard against abuse of minors - regrettably too late for those who we are hearing about recently who were abused before these rules went into place. We cannot let such human faults - which are not in line with the Wisdom of God - take us away from the wonderful fact that in our Eucharist today we share in that meal that allows us to be fed by word and sacrament - allowing God to penetrate us, fill us, and transform us. True wisdom, and the answers to all the questions which occupy us, are to be found in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus, through the Church, spreads the banquet by proclaiming the word, by teaching, and by celebrating the sacrament that makes Jesus ***truly and physically present***. This is the profound truth that lies behind a Church made up of us flawed human beings. We should not let ourselves be distracted from that truth, instead, let us all receive Jesus' body and blood in openness and faith - and let ourselves be fed.