

FIRST READING: Wisdom 7:22b–8:1

A reading from the Book of Wisdom:

In Wisdom is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, Manifold, subtle, agile, clear, unstained, certain, Not baneful, loving the good, keen, unhampered, beneficent, kindly, Firm, secure, tranquil, all-powerful, all-seeing, And pervading all spirits, though they be intelligent, pure and very subtle. For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion, and she penetrates and pervades all things by reason of her purity. For she is an aura of the might of God and a pure effusion of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nought that is sullied enters into her.

For she is the refugence of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of God, the image of his goodness. And she, who is one, can do all things, and renews everything while herself perduring; And passing into holy souls from age to age, she produces friends of God and prophets. For there is nought God loves, be it not one who dwells with Wisdom. For she is fairer than the sun and surpasses every constellation of the stars. Compared to light, she takes precedence; for that, indeed, night supplants, but wickedness prevails not over Wisdom. Indeed, she reaches from end to end mightily and governs all things well.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 119:89, 90, 91, 130, 135, 175

Your word is for ever, O Lord.

Your word, O LORD, endures forever; it is firm as the heavens.

Your word is for ever, O Lord.

Through all generations your truth endures; you have established the earth, and it stands firm.

Your word is for ever, O Lord.

According to your ordinances, they still stand firm: all things serve you.

Your word is for ever, O Lord.

The revelation of your words sheds light, giving understanding to the simple.

Your word is for ever, O Lord.

Let your countenance shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.

Your word is for ever, O Lord.

Let my soul live to praise you, and may your ordinances help me.

Your word is for ever, O Lord.

Gospel: Luke 17:20-25

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke:

Asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus said in reply, "The coming of the Kingdom of God cannot be observed, and no one will announce, 'Look, here it is,' or, 'There it is.' For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you." Then he said to his disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. There will be those who will say to you, 'Look, there he is,' or 'Look, here he is.' Do

not go off, do not run in pursuit. For just as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first he must suffer greatly and be rejected by this generation.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection for the 32nd Thursday of the Year

For all its eloquence in descriptive poetry and in all the glowing and lofty things the author of Wisdom has written, has he told us what wisdom is? This passage is what my homiletics professors would have labeled pious platitudes. There are a lot of words here, but what do they say? I've read this passage every other year since 1978. My impression of it remains the same. I still ask, what is wisdom? In my asking, God's Word is effective. I seek God's wisdom as a result of my reading.

It turns out that it's not what one would expect. It is knowing and following God's will. It has nothing to do with what we learn in school or from our experiences. Today's psalm 119 lays it out well. Wisdom comes as we discern what God wants and knowing God's presence in our actions, relationships and living life in this world. It comes through God's grace to us as a gift. Seeking God will, discerning God's will and putting God's will into action may seem a lot of work and to be all on us, but the reality is these things are God's complete gifts to us. Through them, God brings us more deeply into our relationship with God and one another.

We have life, faith and love. We breathe by God's grace. We love with God's grace. We turn to God for forgiveness as God's grace. Remembering God, seeking God and prayer are the seeds that lead us to wisdom, by God's grace. I like, though, that Wisdom is feminine. We call God our father and Jesus our brother. Some scholars have noted that this depiction of divine wisdom is the foretaste of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Can we call the Spirit our mother or sister? Just a thought.

Jesus has promised the Kingdom of God. All four gospels have the promise. Luke has told us, "Know this; the Kingdom of God is among you." It's not in what we make, earn, or deserve. It's not out there in the world. It's not apart from our souls. It's already a part of us. I enjoy puns. We all have faith in God and in Jesus; the Kingdom has its roots in us now. We don't have to look anywhere else but within us. There are no divine lightshows to advertise or hype it. We have God's Word; the promise is Jesus. The Kingdom of God began with Jesus; his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. These things led to Pentecost and the birth of Jesus Church by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These events have led us here, to this minute, together and seeking God's Kingdom.

To seek Wisdom and to know the Kingdom of God is to remember God's abiding presence within us. God is holy and thinking of God leads us deeper into God. We call this prayer. We call this worship. We call this the Eucharist. We are in wisdom's presence as we gather in Jesus' name. That wasn't too hard; was it.

May we turn to God in all things.

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