



Christ in Our Neighborhood

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Prayer

Loving Father, You have prepared a table before us. May we recognize the unmerited gifts You have provided and always give thanks to You, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Proverbs 9:1-6

In Chapter 9 of Proverbs, the inspired author contrasts Wisdom and Foolishness, representing them as women, each inviting people to her banquet. In our First Reading, we hear Wisdom's invitation; and her banquet symbolizes joy and closeness to God. Her grand house is a symbol of her status as the Lord's friend; it is also a symbol of marital fidelity which builds up a loving household. Such cannot be attained without God's help.

The number seven implies a sacred completeness to her house. In order to enter this sacred house and take part in the banquet, her guests must leave aside their old foolish ways. To accept Wisdom's invitation is to embrace the life that God has designed for us. The connection between wisdom and life in *Proverbs* is the lead into our understanding Jesus' words in the Gospel. This is the thread that connects our First Reading to the Gospel.

Question

What does wisdom mean to you?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Ephesians 5:15-20

In our Second Reading, St Paul also contrasts wisdom and foolishness, but here we encounter a new meaning of "wisdom." In the ancient Jewish world, Wisdom was regarded as a personified being who assisted mankind in observing orderliness in their lives. God was seen as the ultimate in orderliness, so to be orderly was to be God-like. But Paul stated that it is the "wise" who see that a new day has begun in Christ (cf. Eph 5:14) and live that out in their lives. Paul gives a Christian meaning to the Greek concept that wisdom is an attribute of the individual.

We are constantly rushed, absorbed in trying to be connected and productive. Yet we also try to tell ourselves that we have all the time in the world. Either way is a path of foolishness. So, Paul advised that to live wisely is to strive to "*understand what the will of the Lord is*" [Eph 5:17] and to live it out.

Question

How do you know and experience Jesus in your life?

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Commentary

Gospel: John 6:51-58

Our Gospel Reading brings to mind the Holy Eucharist, pointed to by our Psalm Response - the feast we are invited to partake in. But in the way Jesus spoke, we realize that we are also encountering God's wisdom here. The Wisdom of God is not primarily about knowledge, or about what we are to believe. Rather, it is about trusting, trusting in a profound promise.

In His words, Jesus didn't offer an explanation; He didn't offer something they were to believe. Instead, He voiced a profound promise: "*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day*" [Jn 6:54]. And He stated the condition associated with that promise: "*unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you*" [Jn 6:53].

In God's wisdom, there is nothing about our human existence that has long-term meaning or purpose. Rather our whole reason for being finds its purpose in this promise. In God's wisdom, to be "wise" is to trust in this promise and be mindful of the condition. For, everything else, in its time, will come and go.

Question

Is the Eucharist the "source and summit" of your faith?

This Week's Task

As followers of Jesus, we have a responsibility to share the truth of our faith with others. That can be scary. There will be times when the subject of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist will come up. Spend a good bit of time this week formulating how you will answer. Will you bring the subject up? With whom? What will you give as the reason for your faith in it.

Prayer

We thank you Lord for you have not rejected us, sinners, but have made us worthy to partake of your precious Body and Blood. May it heal our souls and bodies; illumine the eyes of our hearts; be the fount of your divine graces; and the fulfillment of wisdom. Preserved in holiness, may we remember to live not for ourselves but for you alone. And when you come for us, may we pass from this life holding firm to your promise of eternal life. Amen.

The prayer continues with Psalm 34.

Psalm

Response: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

The LORD has eyes for the just, and ears
for their cry.
The LORD confronts the evildoers,
to destroy remembrance of them from the earth.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

When the just cry out, the LORD hears
them, and from all their distress he
rescues them.
The LORD is close to the
brokenhearted; and those who are
crushed in spirit he saves.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Many are the troubles of the just one,
but out of them all the LORD delivers
him; he watches over all his bones;
not one of them shall be broken.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Conclude with an Our Father