

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 8, 2019

“Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in WISDOM are safe.”
(Proverbs 28:26)

A few months ago, during the Easter Season and leading up to Pentecost, Deacon Bullock and I presented a series of reflections on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts received from God, who is within each of us, express the essence of God’s plan of salvation, completing and perfecting the virtues we all possess. Before I get into the first reading for today, I want to look back at the reflection on the first Gift of the Holy Spirit, Wisdom.

Wisdom is more than knowledge and understanding. In fact, by combining knowledge and understanding, Wisdom leads to a deeper meaning of the truths of our Christian belief. The Psalmist, in Psalm 111, verse 10, tells us that *“Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom; prudent are all who practice it.”* By putting the material and spiritual worlds in their proper places through Wisdom, we can better carry our crosses in charity and patience. It allows us to see all things in a clearer perspective. Wisdom directs the choices we make. Wisdom leads us to act upon God’s revelation by his divine guidance, Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, helping us to more fully understand God.

We find in THE Book of PROVERBS and in the Book of WISDOM a personification of this gift. King Solomon presented Wisdom as an elegant lady offering long life, riches and repute. In Proverbs 1:20-21 we read; *“Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the open squares she raises her voice. Down the crowded way she calls out, at the city gates she utters her words.”* Referring to Wisdom as “she” gives us a more profound vision of this gift.

In the Book of WISDOM chapter nine we see the model prayer of the ideal king praying for Wisdom. In verses 1-6 the king proclaims, “I stand in need of your Wisdom”. He goes on in verses 7-12, praying that God will send him the Wisdom he needs to lead his people. Finally, in verses 13-18 (today’s first reading); he acknowledges that by himself man cannot do anything without the Gift of Wisdom. This can also be our prayer. Let’s take a close look at this last part.

The king begins this portion of his prayer acknowledging the limits of human knowledge. Due to this limited knowledge, man only touches on the understanding of natural things of this world. Can we then know how God perceives and manages His creation? Man, as part of creation, bound by a lack of understanding and the constraints of time, has a restricted vision of life and remains uncertain of God’s total plan. The tendency of the human mind and body to fall to temptation restricts the soul in the pursuit of the things of God.

Because of this limited knowledge, we must accept that only through divine intervention from the Holy Spirit can we understand the revelation of God’s plan in our lives. The Spirit calls us to reach out to God in prayer, the Spirit leads us to ask the right questions, and the Spirit empowers our discernment to hear the answers.

Proverbs 28:26 gives us the words from the top of this reflection:

“Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in WISDOM are safe.”