

# Commentary on Sunday Scripture – Year A

## 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

### **First reading:**

(Wisdom 6. 12-16)

*The Search for Wisdom*

For the Bible, wisdom is not knowledge, such as scientific or philosophical knowledge acquired by study and learning, or even the sound judgment acquired by experience and maturity. It is the reflection of God's own Wisdom, the Wisdom by which God creates the world and guides humanity.

Wisdom is, therefore, divine, a reflection or image of God, 'the reflection of the eternal light and the image of his power'. Everything created is good in so far as it expresses this Wisdom of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus is seen as the incarnation of God's own Wisdom as well as the incarnation of the 'Word' of God, for Jesus is both the firstborn and the summit of God's creative purpose.

In Greek, 'wisdom' is a feminine noun, and therefore divine Wisdom is often represented as a female character, a hostess inviting to her banquet all who desire true Wisdom. We need to seek out this Wisdom. It can be granted only by God, but God is eager to share divine Wisdom with those who truly seek it. This reading is given here to pair with the gospel reading, through the image of keeping awake to seek for the banquet of Wisdom.

### **Question:**

*Is my skill at cookery or car maintenance the same as me or a part of me? Is God's Wisdom the same as God?*

### **Second reading:**

(1 Thessalonians 4.13-18)

*The Last Trumpet*

The first Christians were unclear about many things in their faith. The Thessalonians were obviously worried about the fate of Christians who had died.

Had Paul not taught them that Christ had conquered death? What was this talk about an imminent final coming of Christ to bring history to its end? How soon would it occur? Paul gives an answer in terms of a familiar image, a Roman triumphal procession.

After a great victory in battle, a Roman general could be granted a 'triumph', marching through the streets of Rome with his victorious army amid cheering crowds, like a successful football team or local regiment coming home. There was no need to worry about Christian friends and relations who had died, for they would come with Christ in his triumphal procession, and the rest of us would join him on the way.

All this, of course, is imagery. Neither Paul nor anyone else had any idea when it would occur. But he teaches with firm confidence that it would occur. The timing is irrelevant. We don't mind waiting a bit, so long as we can be sure that we will all be reunited in the joyful triumph of Christ's victory over death.

### **Question:**

*Can't I just forget about the whole thing? I am not going to die tomorrow?*

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## **Gospel:**

*(Matthew 25.1-13)*

### *The Ten Wedding Attendants*

Of course, they weren't bridesmaids! According to the custom of the time, the girls were attendant on the bridegroom, to greet him with their lamps as he arrived at the wedding reception. Anyway, half of them weren't ready, let him down, and then found themselves shut out.

There is a subtle difference between the parables given in Mark's and Matthew's gospels. In Mark, they are all about the sudden coming of God's Kingship in history, at the time of Jesus.

Jesus proclaimed that the crisis was now. In him, God's reign had arrived: it was time to take drastic action. Matthew's parables take a longer-term view: there will be a final judgment at the end of time, for which we, in the Church and in the course of history, must prepare.

Some will, some won't. Some will be found to be wheat, others to be weeds. When the catch of fish comes in, some fish will be thrown away, some kept. Some will be sheep and others goats. Each year, as the liturgical year draws to a close, the Church reminds us of this. And it will be sudden and unpredictable, like a burglar on the one night I forgot to lock the door, or like a mousetrap snapping shut, or like the unpredictable moment of birth pangs.

## **Question:**

*Can't I just forget about the whole thing? I am not going to die tomorrow.*

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