

## Reflection for the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

*There is no god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show you have not unjustly condemned. For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.*  
*Wisdom 12:13,16*

The First Reading this Sunday on the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time is taken from the Book of Wisdom. The first two verses of this reading set the tone for the rest of this reading and all the readings contained within the Mass this Sunday. These two verses state that there is only one God and He is just and loving, who have mastery over all creation. It is clear by these two verses that there is no polytheism, there is only one God.

The idea of a monotheistic faith might seem the norm for us today, for today there are three major monotheistic faiths in the world; Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all three deny that there is any other god, but the one true God. In fact, all three faiths trace their origins back to Abraham. Judaism and Christianity trace their tie to Abraham through his son Isaac, and Islam traces it through his son Ishmael. When the book of Wisdom was written in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, Judaism was by and large the only monotheistic faith in the world at the time. Most faiths in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC were polytheistic. The fact that Judaism believed that there is only one God, made Judaism very different from all other faiths. So, the first two verses of our First Reading today were a very bold statement when they were written. These two verses make a statement of faith and belief, that was at the time contrary to what the norm was in the world.

Verses 13 and 16 of chapter 12 in the Book of Wisdom are a bold statement of faith and help explain the purpose of the writing of the Book of Wisdom. Most Biblical Scholars would agree that this book was written in the Greek language but was composed in Alexandria, Egypt in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Also, many Scholars suggest that there are two authors for the Book of Wisdom, the first author composed chapters 1 thru 5 and the second author composed the rest of the book chapters 6 thru 19. In more recent times there has been a movement to suggest that there is only one author of the Book of Wisdom, but that it was written at two different times of his life. The second part of the book being written later in his life. This new view of one author, helps explain the more mature thought coming from the second part of the book and it also helps explain the consistent style that is found throughout the whole Book of Wisdom.

The author or authors of this Book that contains our first reading this Sunday was wrote this work to strengthen the faith of the Jewish people living in Alexandria Egypt. The Jewish people that were living the Alexandria Egypt in the first century BC were a minority in a land that was Hellenistic and polytheistic. The Book of Wisdom was written to remind a group of people living in a foreign land, about who, they are and to remind them that they are "*The People of the Book.*" They are God's chosen people and because of this fact they are different from the people they are living with. Being a minority, it is easy to get lost in the larger culture and just start to fit in with the larger society. The Book of Wisdom was written to remind a small group of people that they are a part of a larger group and a part of a faith that goes back thousands of years.

The message of our First Reading this Sunday and the message of the whole Book of Wisdom can and should speak to us as Catholics today in the year 2020 AD. We live within a larger society that does not completely hold the same values and truths that we do. We can sometimes get lost in the larger group and just try to fit in. May we today embrace the message of the Book of Wisdom that reminds us of the one true God and that we have chosen to follow God that has created the world and sent His son into the world for our salvation.