

## Reflection for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

Today in our readings on this 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary time we have a message of the importance of wisdom. Our First Reading taken from the Book of Wisdom and our Gospel Reading taken from the Gospel of Matthew clearly speaks of wisdom and the importance of it in one's daily life. But our Responsorial Psalm taken from Psalm 63 and our Second Reading taken from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians also speaks of the impact of making a wise choice in one's journey in this life. We also find throughout scriptures an ongoing message of the importance of making wise decisions in one's daily life. The message we can take from our Sunday Readings this week is that we are being reminded to seek out knowledge and wisdom in this world.

It is interesting to note that in the Old Testament in particular in the Books; of Wisdom, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Sirach, all refer to wisdom as a "Lady." To this day we hear of wisdom, being called "Lady Wisdom." The reason for wisdom being seen as and referred to as a "Women" can simply be that in Hebrew, wisdom is grammatically a feminine noun. This can be the explanation, but it is interesting to note that most Scholars are of the understanding that the book of Wisdom was not written in Hebrew but in Greek, this is the case with a number of the books in the Old Testament that speak about "Lady Wisdom."

If we are to assume that it is intentional that wisdom is viewed as female in the Old Testament, this assumption helps explain the New Testament focus on "Sophia", wisdom as female and "Logos", Divine word as male and Jesus. What message can we take from wisdom being seen as female, my mother would say "now John this is a question you should not ask." Growing up my mother felt there were many questions that should not be asked but most of the time after she informed me, that the question should not be asked, she would then provide the answer. In the case of "Lady Wisdom" my Mother would say, "John, now you know that women are smarter than men". My Mother would go on to point out that God first created "Man" and then he created "Woman," so women being God's second effort at creating humans he would of course improve on the first effort.

But there might still be another way to look at on why we have "Lady Wisdom" and it might be the qualities that we as humans attribute to women. Recently on the internet I found a listing of the "10 Qualities of a Lady," they are; sincerity, gratitude, perseverance, aspiration, courage, goodness, generosity, equality, receptivity, humility. If these are the qualities that we as humans see or hope to see in women then it makes sense that the people of the Old Testament and of the early Church embraced "Lady Wisdom." Wisdom is not about being smart or having a high IQ, but rather wisdom is about being able to apply what we know in a way that goes far beyond our knowledge or experience. The qualities that are so often admired in women are not their strength or resolve but their humility and receptivity. Being wise speaks more to how we respond then to what we know. Wisdom requires a person to have something more than knowledge we need to have enough faith in God that enables us to have goodness and generosity.