

## Reflection for the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, "Ask something of me and I will give it to you." Solomon answered: "Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong. For who is able to govern this vast people of yours?" First Book of Kings 3: 5,9*

Our first reading this Sunday is taken from the First Book of Kings, it is in this reading that we hear an amazing offer that God makes to King Solomon the son of King David. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and informs him that he can ask for anything and God will give it to him. It is worth taking a pause that this moment and reflecting on how often God appears to us in our dreams, this is not the norm but an unusual and unique event. If this event had happened to us, God offering us anything we request, what would we ask for? That truly is food for thought, of all the things that are important to us, all the dreams that each of us has what would we ask for if God came to us in a dream and offered us anything our hearts would desire.

Our request from God might depend on where we are at in life and what are the pressing needs or concerns of the day. Today during the covid-19 pandemic, it might be natural for many of us to focus our request on health issues such as a vaccine for covid-19. King Solomon was just starting his reign as King of Israel and Judah. He had recently followed his father, King David to the throne and had recently married the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt to secure an ally. It would be natural at this point in the reign of King Solomon to have a concern for safety and for peace in his Kingdom. One could understand if King Solomon had requested wealth or a powerful army for this would have helped him secure safety and peace for his Kingdom. But this is not what King Solomon asked for, rather he asked for "an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong."

King Solomon asked God the creator of the Universe not for wealth, or health but rather he asked for wisdom. The request made to God was not for his own wellbeing but rather for the wellbeing of God's people. In fact, King Solomon does not refer to the Kingdom or subjects as his, but rather God's. The way King Solomon refers to the Kingdom and the people in it can help us understand how this man saw his position. King Solomon, the son of King David, felt that he was appointed by God and following in the footsteps of his father. From the request that King Solomon makes to God asking for wisdom, we can come to the conclusion that King Solomon saw himself not having a divine right to be king but having a divine responsibility as king.

Today we have the history and tradition of the "Wisdom of Solomon", he at first glance can be seen as a wise and noble King. But like all of us he was not perfect and is human. Today many of us might struggle with that fact that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. He also worshiped other gods and strained his relationship with the one true God. This shows that King Solomon is like us, trying to do good and follow the one true God but can make mistakes and can get lost.

In closing, we can learn from King Solomon, may we not only ask God for wisdom but also an increase in faith. Today, and in every age, there is always a need for more wisdom and faith. Wisdom will help us find solutions to the challenges that we face today, and faith will help us follow the one true God in this world and in the next.