

Homily of 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B (08-19-18)

In the first reading, Wisdom built her house. She sets up seven columns, that is seven large tables, dressed with all kinds of meat and mixed wine. She sends out her errand men to invite us, the simple and who lack understanding saying, "Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed! Forsake foolishness that you may live; advance in the way of understanding."

St. Paul in the second reading continues the invitation. "Watch carefully how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise... Do not continue in ignorance... Do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Holy Spirit..." St. Paul was addressing the Ephesians; many of whom were in the habit of drinking too much wine and getting drunk. At that time Ephesus was a city that produced a lot of wine.

Jesus Christ is the Wisdom. The Church is the seven columns where Jesus feeds us with the word of God and the Eucharist. Jesus says in the Gospel, "For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him."

We, Catholics, take the words of Jesus literally. We believe that the prayer of consecration by the priest during the Eucharistic celebration changes the bread into the Body of Jesus, and the wine into the Blood of Jesus. We believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. We believe that the Body and Blood of Jesus are spiritual food for our journey here on earth and our journey to eternal life.

One of the effects of the spiritual food, the word of God and the Body and Blood of Jesus, is the desire for wisdom and understanding which are gifts of the Holy Spirit. Like Solomon, let us pray for wisdom and understanding, that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit in all we say and all we do.

There is so much ignorance, foolishness and life of debauchery in our world today. We, therefore, need the wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit. Parents and grandparents must make extra effort in guiding their children in the way of wisdom and understanding. That is why it is costing the archdiocese so much to keep the Catholic schools up and running. C. S. Lewis writes, "Education without God makes a person a mere clever devil." Whoever we are, wherever we are, and whatever we have, if God is absent, the Evil one is present.

Being clever or smart is not the same as being wise and having understanding. To be clever means to be intelligent. While to be wise means to have good judgement. We have many clever people but few wise people.

We pray for wisdom and understanding for our leaders and rulers in the Church and in the civil society. Without wisdom and understanding the people are led astray. Let us pray for the desire of wisdom and understanding in the country, in our communities, in the parish, in our homes, in our schools, in our establishments, and in our work places. Where there is no wisdom, there is foolishness, ignorance, wrong and bad decisions and judgements. Where there is no understanding there is disharmony, disagreement and confusion.

Let us pray that we may be filled with the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom and understanding in times of decision, confusion, darkness, ignorance, and foolishness. Finally, let us remember that Jesus Christ and the word of God are the ultimate sources of wisdom and understanding. The closer we are to the word of God and to the Body and Blood of Christ, the more we are filled with wisdom and understanding.

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