

## **“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO SEEK FOR WISDOM”**

**Fr. Max Oliva, S.J.**  
**November 8, 2020**

In the Opening Prayer of today’s Mass, we prayed for “freedom of heart” – that we might choose **wisely** what God wishes.

So, let’s spend a few minutes considering Wisdom.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, wisdom is considered in two ways: as something essentially rational and practical seen in maxims or proverbs of moral conduct, and as a gift from God. Wisdom is gained by counsel and instruction from those who are wise. Wisdom is personified in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) as feminine: “Resplendent and unfading is wisdom, and **she** is readily perceived by those who love **her** and found by those who seek **her**” (First Reading). The Psalmist “thirsts” for her.

The fact that we pray to the Holy Spirit for wisdom has led some scholars to relate to the Spirit as feminine.

The Israelite understanding of Wisdom is based on the reverential fear of God: creature to Creator. Finally, wisdom is different from knowledge; it orders what is known toward a determined end. In the Bible, that end is God and God alone.

Some questions seeking wisdom are:

What is the purpose of my life?  
Where is God in my life?  
What are my basic faith values?  
What is the ultimate meaning of my life?

This brings us to the Gospel and one of the parables shared by Jesus. Parables require a willingness in the listener to think

### **PAGE TWO**

deeply and to take time to reflect on their meaning. They are wisdom stories, not conventional ones. In the parables all the assumptions of human life are held up for scrutiny and are found wanting; parables often disturb our world view. However, if we persist, by taking the time to reflect on their hidden message they bring us closer to God and how God wants us to be.

Scripture Scholar Fr. George Smiga introduces us to today’s parable of the 5 wise virgins and the 5 foolish ones:

“At first it seems uncharitable that the wise bridesmaids refuse to share their oil with the foolish ones. Yet an important truth of this parable emerges when we understand that the response of the wise bridesmaids is fully justified..... The foolish are those who do not assume their proper responsibilities, those who are negligent in doing what is right.”

The “oil” represents a state of readiness.

The bridegroom coming at night - the uncertain and unexpected time of the Lord's coming.

The "wise 5" understand their need to be spiritually prepared for the God of surprises.

Writer Maureen Wicken brings the parable home to us:

"Like wise bridesmaids, the wise ones of this world are already making time to be with God in their everyday lives, keeping the night watches like the psalmist, and allowing God's love to fill their oil jars so they always experience God's presence. The foolish ones are not ready and do not realize that God is actually waiting for them."

**PAGE THREE**

**CONCLUSION**

*Loving God, help us to be wise disciples  
of your Son:*

HELP US TO BE  
*prepared for your unexpected visits;  
and open to finding You in the ordinary  
activities  
of our life as well as the bigger ones.*

**AMEN.**

Fr. Max Oliva, S.J.  
November 8, 2020