

June 3, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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I SOUGHT WISDOM OPENLY

By Father David C. Robinson, SJ

An Excerpt from Today's First Reading

When I was young and innocent, I sought wisdom openly in my prayer. I prayed for her before the temple, and I will seek her until the end, and she flourished as a grape soon ripe. My heart delighted in her, My feet kept to the level path, because from earliest youth I was familiar with her. In the short time I paid heed, I met with great instruction. Since in this way I have profited, I will give my teacher grateful praise. I became resolutely devoted to her—the good I persistently strove for.

SIRACH 51:12-17

Reflection

In these post-Easter days of life in the Church, we are invited to reflect deeply

on the ways in which the promises of the Resurrection, and the emergent power of life in the Holy Spirit, astounded the first-century communities of the faithful, and led to a radical re-appraisal of what it might mean to be God's Chosen in the midst of an often-frightening world. Questions of cultural integrity, community solidarity, and a re-creating of religious practice spawned enormous dialog and conflict as new Christians attempted to discern God's vision for their future.

One of the powerful voices that helped to bridge the passage of former traditions into the world of an evolving covenant birthed in the life and ministry of Jesus was that of Ben Sira, a scribe writing some two hundred years BCE. His maxims and exhortations elevated the role and impact of Wisdom in a world of political and social upheaval. His personal passion and inspiring testimony invited his fellow-believers in the Jewish world to be imbued with the integrity and moral clarity of a life steeped in the Wisdom of God that had guided them along numerous dangerous paths through the centuries.

REFLECTION CONTINUES BELOW



Mother of Wisdom
Photo by Fr. David C. Robinson, SJ

Reflection Continued

The term ‘wisdom’ had evolved from a designation for ‘knowledge’ into a divine presence, a Wisdom figure who companioned God in the creation of the world. By the time of Ben Sira, Wisdom was associated with the ‘breath’ or ‘spirit’ of God hovering over the deep in Genesis. Since the noun is feminine in both

Hebrew and Greek, it came to be associated with the form of a woman. For Ben Sira, Wisdom was an endless source of inspiration, insight, and encouragement. From childhood, his thirst for the fruits of Wisdom was the foundation of his growth in moral stature, ethical behavior, and humble submission to the call and mission of God throughout creation.

As a model for maturation in our own walk with God, Wisdom is not merely the source of a disciplined conscience or a cosmic consciousness of the divine. She is, rather, the humble and persevering heart of a life surrendered to divine initiative on the path of virtue. Simply knowing the good and affirming the good does not fulfill God's broader intention for humanity. We, like all of Wisdom's children, are those who embrace, and are embraced by, that transformative Companion who inspires us to greatness of soul in God's service, and to a gracious concern for all those who join us on life's odyssey of love.

For Pondering

- What does it mean to you to say that you pursue 'Wisdom' on your daily walk of faith?
- How would you explain the role of 'virtue' and 'ethics' in the moral wisdom at the heart of Christian life?
- How do you experience the inspiration of Wisdom in your practice of discernment?

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