

Church of the Good Shepherd
and
St. John the Evangelist

Trinity Sunday
June 3, 2007
Fr. Bill McGinty

“Searching for Wisdom”

Have you ever met wisdom? The Book of Proverbs wants to talk to us today about wisdom and of course in true Jewish Old Testament style wants to personify her as a beautiful queen that we should all prize.

For most of us wisdom is hard won and hard to come by. We can look back along the winding road of our life and be wise long after the fact. Clergy have a saying: “Young priest don’t look wise and they are not; middle aged priest look wise but they are not; old priests look wise and they usually are.”

Trinity Sunday, coming immediately after Pentecost isolates wisdom as a gift of the Holy Spirit and invites us to quest after it. It is a quest that for most of us lasts a lifetime. Winston Churchill admitted that in his early years he was incredibly foolish. It was only after the longest journey, involving so many mistakes, wrong roads, pain, depression and sadness that he emerged as a great leader and a wise man.

Surely, our journey is somewhat similar; wisdom will always escape us until the day that we place our trust, our hopes and our faith in the Spirit of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Our Founding Fathers in the Episcopal Church knew a thing or two about wisdom and its relationships with faith. They knew the frailties, and propensities of bishops and priests to be uneven, mistaken and often just plain wrong; wrong in the decisions and roads they chose. Perhaps, that is why they gave us Vestries and a Constitution that the collective wisdom of the whole, might come to the rescue of the one. People have asked me what I value the most about our Episcopal government and I tell them “loyalty;” because without loyalty the Holy Spirit cannot come among us and give us the collective wisdom we need to perform the mission that Jesus has commissioned us to do.

The faith that we have in one another is no less the faith we claim to have in Jesus Christ our Savior. Through it, St Paul says, in today’s 2nd reading, we are justified. As one body of faith we receive grace, hope and share the glory of God.

If we suffer, we suffer together. If we endure we endure together. All our hope as a church and as a people is bound up in that faith that we share. It is the blood of this community - everyone else is but a stranger. Here in this place where we, you and I share the body and Blood: this is our Covenant; this is our castle; our Holy place. We do not ask for their help when we bury our dead, care for our sick, or maintain our building. And I as your leader will not allow that sacred Covenant, trust and faith that we share with one another, to be

The Rev. William J. McGinty, Rector
110 West Catharine Street, Milford, Pennsylvania 18337
Phone: (570) 296-8123 ♦ Fax: (570) 296-4383

Church of the Good Shepherd and St. John the Evangelist

violated by anyone who has not sweated what we have sweated and dug the graves that we have dug.

“God’s” love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us, St Paul tells us. We are more than willing to share that love. We have shared it with Kago Keji and many Diocesan ministries in the past.

Perhaps this is where our collective wisdom, as a gift of the Spirit, kicks in. That in face of hardship and adversity we may seek the way of love and peace that Jesus has taught us.

Jesus too, in the Gospel speaks of the Spirit of truth who comes to guide us into all truth. It is the Spirit, we are told in the Gospel, who will take the true teaching of Jesus and make it come alive in our lives. In order for that to happen there is but one condition, that we allow ourselves to be open to the Spirit.

Being open to the Spirit entails that we allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit and by the teaching of our Savior even when we don’t necessarily want to go down that road. Often we resist that kind of guidance and wisdom and go our own way instead.

Once there was a young girl named Wendy. She was an only child and her parents didn’t have her until they were older in life.

They ran a small restaurant called *The Travelers Rest* and worked from 6am until 10 pm to provide a good home.

They were also deeply religious; went to church and stressed the importance of school, music, and service in her life. In due course she was set for college. She chose a college that was a little too expensive for their means, but they took out a loan and made the sacrifices they needed to make. The first year they made several visits to her at weekends, but as time went on she discouraged this. She had made new and rich young friends among kids from affluent families. She was ashamed her parents toiled in a mere restaurant and she began to despise their poverty and lack of education.

In time she met a boy called Benjamin De Carta-Lane whose family had made their fortune in the railway boom of the 19 hundreds. He couldn’t understand why she wouldn’t talk about her parents or take him home to meet them. She made many excuses and even stalled over marriage because she did not want her simple origins exposed.

In her senior year Ben took her to meet his grandmother Ruth, who lived in a small town in New England. She was the Postmistress, deliverer, and the operator of a one room store that sold this and that. It was not long before she, Ruth, recognized what was wrong with young Wendy.

The Rev. William J. McGinty, Rector
110 West Catharine Street, Milford, Pennsylvania 18337
Phone: (570) 296-8123 ♦ Fax: (570) 296-4383

Church of the Good Shepherd

and

St. John the Evangelist

“Wendy” she said, “You are a smart girl, but a foolish woman. True treasure and riches cannot be counted in bank accounts, cars or fine houses, but in the hearts and minds of people of truth. I have lived in this village for the last thirty years and each day it is the little people who make up the whole, that fill my life with joy and contentment.”

Wisdom invites each of us to change and to growth. Some of us take longer than others to learn what Ruth knew. Till those wisdom years catch up with us, it is indeed a good thing that we have the collective wisdom of our church family to steer us right along the road of Christ’s teaching.

The following year after graduation Ben and Wendy got married. Not in St Patrick’s Cathedral, as Ben’s parents had planned, but in the small stone church of Wendy’s home town. Nor did they have their reception at the Waldorf Astoria, but rather, to her parents delight, at their little restaurant. It was a little crowded, but no one seemed to mind. Wendy found her happiness that day among the people who truly loved her.

Many years later she would look back at how foolish she had been. She began to treasure the little things that made life so important. The restaurant isn’t there any more, nor are her parents but her memories remain.

Perhaps it will be the same for us that our memories of this place will long survive, the time we have spent together. Jesus attempts to teach this lesson to his disciples in the Gospel that they too may love in truth. Let us pray in this Eucharist for the collective wisdom to preserve that faith and fellowship.

Amen+