

Reflection for Wednesday, November 12, 2025

The Thirty Second Week of the Year

By Joan Mumaw, IHM

These days we are reading from the Book of Wisdom. Sometimes the days readings seem to fit nicely together. Today's were a puzzle for me, so I went to my African Bible with commentary to read a bit about the book of Wisdom. Wisdom literature was composed in the 1st century BC in Alexandria in Egypt. It is highly influenced by Greek thought. Some Jewish scholars thought that Greek thought was superior to Jewish thought. The Book of Wisdom can be seen as an attempt to preserve Jewish culture and religion. It is excluded from the Hebrew bible, because it was written in Greek. It can be seen as a synthesis of Jewish and Greek thought.

From Jewish thought we receive "Lady Wisdom" seen as the Spirit of God and Word of God; this is true Wisdom rather than that offered by the Greek Goddess, Isis. We also know God as one who rewards the good and punishes those who do evil in the afterlife. Tuesday's reading reflects this notion. (read from Tuesday)

From the Greeks we learn of the possibility of knowing God through creation and knowing God as the merciful One.

The purpose of the book of Wisdom was to assure the Jewish people that they had no reason to envy or imitate the culture of Egypt and the Greek gods. God is the protector of his people. No other power is needed or wanted.

In today's first reading we learn that Wisdom is required to govern wisely and those in authority should seek it. Authority is given by God and because of this judgement will be stern for those in authority who fail to keep the Law. The lowly may be pardoned out of mercy, but the mighty shall be put to the test. Scrutiny will be rigorous. (Those in elected positions need to "listen up" and heed these words from Wisdom).

All is not lost for those in authority. This section from Wisdom goes on to say, "To you my Word is addressed; learn from it and do not sin. Desire my Word and you shall be instructed.

The Word today is to be found in the Gospel. From Luke we learn today of the healing ministry of Jesus which is meant for our instruction. Jesus shows no partiality, no distinction in who is offered healing. There is no description of the ethnicity of the lepers who approached Jesus, they may have come from different tribes. We do know that one is from Samaria, a place of foreigners who were held in disdain by the Jews. We also know that leprosy was a disease, not



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unlike AIDS today, that was considered the result of sin. Lepers were sidelined and set apart. For Jesus, they were human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, who were poor and in need. Healing was offered to all.

Only one leper returned to give thanks. To him, Jesus said, "Stand up. Go your faith has saved you." Jesus was well schooled in the lessons from the Book of Wisdom. The lowly were to be pardoned out of mercy. A consolation for all of us!

There is much to be learned from today's Scripture, especially for those in authority. And to some degree, we all have or have had some authority to exercise. Perhaps it is over someone who cleans your room or offers assistance.

May we take heed from the Word which is addressed to us in the readings of the day. May we know of God's pardon and mercy. And above all may we give thanks for all that we receive each day.