

Reading Scripture Together Handout

Sunday, August 15, 2021

Lectionary 20, Year B

Introduction

Wisdom prepares a feast, sets her table, and invites all to come and eat her bread and drink her wine. The first chapter of John's gospel owes much to the biblical tradition that imagined Wisdom as existing before anything was created and having a role in the work of creation. Christ, the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24), today invites us to eat his flesh and drink his blood. John's gospel includes no account of the institution of the Lord's supper, but here we can't help hearing Jesus' words as an invitation to the meal of bread and wine we share.

Prayer of the Day

Ever-loving God, your Son gives himself as living bread for the life of the world. Fill us with such a knowledge of his presence that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life to serve you continually, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Proverbs 9:1-6

Wisdom is portrayed as a woman who invites people to partake of her banquet. Just as ordinary food is necessary for physical life, Wisdom's food—insight and understanding—is necessary for fullness of life with God. Partaking of Wisdom's banquet is the way to life.

- 1Wisdom has built her house,
she has hewn her seven pillars.
- 2She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine,
she has also set her table.
- 3She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls
from the highest places in the town,
- 4“You that are simple, turn in here!”
To those without sense she says,
- 5“Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
- 6Lay aside immaturity, and live,
and walk in the way of insight.”

Psalm 34:9-14

Those who seek the Lord lack nothing that is good. (Ps. 34:10)

- 9Fear the Lord, you saints | of the Lord,
for those who fear the | Lord lack nothing.
- 10**The lions are in want and | suffer hunger,
but those who seek the Lord lack nothing | that is
good. R**
- 11Come, children, and lis- | ten to me;
I will teach you reverence | for the Lord.
- 12**Who among you takes plea- | sure in life
and desires long life to en- | joy prosperity?**
- 13Keep your | tongue from evil
and your lips from | lying words.
- 14**Turn from evil | and do good;
seek peace | and pursue it. R**

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:15-20

True wisdom integrates our new reality in Christ with our Christian fellowship and daily conduct. Because we are filled with the Spirit, Christians regularly rejoice together, give thanks to God for one another, and care for one another. In this way we revere our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, ²⁰giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel: John 6:51-58

In John's gospel, the feeding of the five thousand leads to extended teaching in which Jesus identifies himself as the true "bread of life." Finally, in these verses, he makes a connection that would not be understood until after his death, in light of the church's celebration of holy communion.

[Jesus said,] ⁵¹"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

⁵²The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."