

Most Holy Trinity, Year C

Proverbs 8:22-31

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of poetry written anonymously and said to be the work of King Solomon because of his personal reputation as a wise man.⁵ Its main purpose is to teach wisdom.² In the Jewish tradition, divine wisdom is God's self-disclosure. Wisdom is a personification of the essential intelligence of God.⁵ Christian believers have always read this passage as a prophetic allusion to Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.⁵ The Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary, who is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."⁴

Thus says the wisdom of God:

22"The Lord possessed me, the beginning of his ways, the forerunner of his prodigies of long ago;
23from of old Hebrew has no word for "eternity" but "from of old" signifies an indefinite period of time.¹ **I was poured forth,** This expression implies the equivalent of "born." The Hebrews likened the movement of spirit to that of liquids.² **at the first, before the earth.** This is saying that Wisdom is from God and absolutely prior to the visible universe. This implies superiority to all created things.¹

24When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains or springs of water; Wisdom concurred with God when he planned and executed the creation of the universe, adorned it with beauty and variety and established its wonderful order.²

25before the mountains were settled into place, before the hills, I was brought forth; He is saying that Wisdom came before the physical world which is characterized by what is most imposing: the waters *verse 24*, the mountains *verse 25*, and the soil *verse 26*.³

26while as yet the earth and fields were not made, nor the first clods of the world.

27When the Lord established the heavens I was there, Wisdom had a role to play in creation.¹ The Church sees creation as the work of the Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit are all present and active at the beginning of the construction of the universe.⁷ **when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep;** The Jewish people at this time thought of the sky as a solid expanse standing like a vault or dome upon the sea.³

28when he made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the foundations of the earth; The earth is described as having foundations like a building.³ We can also consider that wisdom is the foundation on which all life is built.⁵

29when he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters should not transgress his command;

30then was I beside him as his craftsman, and I was his delight day by day, Wisdom always pleases God.¹

31playing before him all the while, playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the human race." Wisdom finds delight in God and in his creation.¹ Wisdom is a gift from God whereby we become docile to the movement of the Holy Spirit in the contemplation of divine things and in judging all things as God judges them, from HIS point of view. We can see that what He does, He does for the best.⁸ It enables us to see beyond the literal and into the deeper significance of life's events.⁶ The difference between wisdom and common sense is that common sense is the ability God gives to all people to think and make choices; he only gives wisdom to those who follow him.⁵ Wisdom will be our main attribute when we put God first in our lives.(Matthew 6:33)

Romans 5:1-5

It was probably sometime in 57 that Paul dictated a long letter introducing himself to the communities in Rome, which he hoped to visit before too long. This letter to the Romans turned out to be his greatest treatise on his view of the Gospel.¹¹

Brothers and sisters:

1Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, The first benefit of God's grace in Baptism is to rescue us from the misery and degradation of sin. "Justification" is the passage from the state of sin into the state of grace and holiness under the power and leadership of Jesus Christ. There are two parts to this passage: it signifies *departure* from the misery of sin and *arrival* in a new life.⁸ **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,** The peace attainable in this life does not consist in the contentment of someone who wants to have no problems, but rather in the resoluteness full of hope of someone who manages to rise above suffering and stays faithful through endurance.¹⁰

2through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Grace has destined us to share in eternal glory—heaven.⁸ Jesus has reconciled the Christian by leading him into the royal audience chamber and the divine presence.¹

3Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, Suffering is necessary for us because it is the normal way to grow in virtue. It is designed by God for our perfecting. Perfection consists "in the bringing of our wills so closely into conformity with the will of God that, as soon as we realize he wills anything, we desire it ourselves with all our might, and take the bitter with the sweet, knowing that to be His Majesty's will." St. Teresa of Avila¹⁰

4and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, Paul gives us a formulation of how suffering, for the Christian, is an experience that leads to the very opposite of what we might think. Suffering enables us to endure, to develop character, and to hope for victory over suffering with Jesus as model.⁶ Hope is expressed and nourished in prayer, especially in the Our Father, the summary of everything that hope leads us to desire⁴ (CCC 1820)

5and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. God places love in our souls to enable us to love him. St. Augustine explains it: "To love God is entirely a gift of God. He, without being loved, loves us and enabled us to love him. We were loved when we were still displeasing to him, so that we might be given something whereby we could please him."¹⁰

Through Baptism, the justified are given the three theological virtues. By faith they live in peace with God and have access to his grace. In hope they long for the glory of God that awaits them, and through love, they show that the charity of the Spirit dwells in their hearts. Equipped in this way, believers can become more like Christ through endurance and suffering.⁹ The scriptures do not contain a full-fledged theological doctrine about the Trinity; that was developed over the next several centuries. What scripture does offer us is the basis of that doctrine: the Christian experience of God as three in one.⁷

John 16:12-15

This passage is from the Last Supper discourse. We notice the unity of action of the three divine persons. The teaching of Jesus comes from the Father, and the teaching of the Spirit comes from Jesus. There is no difference between the will of the Father, that of the Son and that of the Spirit. Together they bring about the salvation of the world.⁷

Jesus said to his disciples:

¹²“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. Jesus was unable to impart to the apostles all that he wanted them to know but that teaching continues under the guidance of the Spirit. Revelation is complete in content but progressive in understanding. The Catechism assures us that no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴ (CCC 66)

¹³But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. The Spirit continues the teaching mission of Jesus to bear witness to the truth. He counteracts the work of Satan by disclosing the full meaning of the gospel. The guidance of the Spirit is Christ’s guarantee that the gospel will not be corrupted, distorted, or misunderstood by the pope alone or the pope and the bishops united with him during their earthly pilgrimage.¹² He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. Predicting what is to come is part of the Spirit’s function but it especially means that he will help them understand the events that were to happen between this discourse at the Last Supper and the Resurrection.¹

¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. The Spirit receives from Jesus what he is to make understandable to the disciples. He transmits this in the Scriptures he inspired, in the Tradition that is passed on in the Church (The Gospel was handed on in two ways: in writing, which is the Scripture, and orally, which is the spoken words of the preaching of the apostles and the example they gave and by the institutions they established)⁴ (CCC 76), in the teaching arm of the Church called the Magisterium, as well as in the sacramental liturgy, in prayer, in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up, in the signs of apostolic and missionary life and in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation.⁴ (CCC 688)

¹⁵Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.” As the existence of the Church is the result of the shared life of the Father and the Son, so its continuance is the result of the shared life of Son and Spirit.¹

Some of the material for this commentary was taken from: (1) “The Jerome Biblical Commentary,” (2) “The New American Bible, St. Joseph Edition,” (3) “The Book of Proverbs” by Ernest Lussier, S.S.S., (4) “Catechism of the Catholic Church,” (5) “The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study” by Deacon Ken and Marie Finn, (6) “workbook for lectors and gospel readers: 2004” by Aelred R. Rosser, (7) “Workbook for lectors and gospel readers: 1998” by Lawrence E. Mick, (8) “Responding to God” by The Dominicans of the Central Province of St. Albert the Great, (9) “Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans,” (10) “The Navarre Bible: Romans and Galatians,” (11) “The Story of Stories” by Karen Lee Thorp, and (12) “Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of John” With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Habn and Curtis Mitch.

In loving memory of Peg Schneller, who compiled these commentaries.