

Homily (notes) from Canon Philip Dyson
30th July 2023 - 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (Year A): 1st: 1 Kings 3:5,7-12. 2nd: Romans 8:28-30. **Gospel:** Matthew 13:44-52.

Some people write bucket lists; things they hope to do as life goes by. Children do or did write their Christmas or birthday wish list, or certainly make known what is on their mind for gifts.

Solomon hears from the Lord ‘ask what you would like me to give you.’ Solomon had already taken quick action to secure his throne. He follows his father David’s advice **to love and obey God**.

Rather than ask for a long life, riches or power, Solomon asks for **wisdom** to “rule God’s people and to distinguish between good and evil.

This request so pleased God that he not only gives Solomon wisdom but the rest as well. Solomon becomes a prolific author, songwriter and scholar. He builds the Temple.

The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon who was the quintessential wise man of the time. He reigned over all Israel and extended his dominion over other nations. The content of his dream mounts to an idealisation of Solomon’s kingship.

The ideal king was one who would govern his people with discernment, acting as an intermediary between God and his people ensuring that justice was carried out. This is picked up in with verses from the longest psalm.

Who of us can say that, in Solomon’s position, our first instinct would not be to wish selfishly? Even if we didn’t wish for ourselves, we might well ask for something on behalf of our nearest and dearest.

By contrast, Solomon’s response to the Lord is spontaneous, sincere and humble. He takes time to acknowledge the privilege of his inheritance and has the welfare of his people truly at heart. Little wonder that God was pleased with him.

You could say that God was, in fact, only enabling Solomon to realise his true potential. For the young king had already demonstrated outstanding wisdom in his choice. What choice could be wiser than wisdom itself? It arms us for any situation that life can throw at us.

Wisdom has nothing to do with academic or intellectual capability, intelligence or IQ. We might be terrible at the “three R’s”, hopeless at practical things, have no sense of direction, be short on common sense and socially inept. We can be all these things and still be wise.

Wisdom is a “rainbow” word that, by definition, contains much within it - love, compassion, humility, devotion, grace, faith and peace.

Wisdom is the first gift of the spirit. ‘Be thou my wisdom’ we sing. If we earnestly and humbly ask for God’s wisdom in our hearts, we will find our inner source of wisdom and all other qualities contained within it.

But to keep wisdom flowing, we have to draw upon it, time and again. How? The answer, as in so many things, is through prayer.

For wealth comes and goes, and houses eventually crumble, but if we turn to God - and keep turning in prayer, we will find that God’s wisdom runs within, infinite and everlasting.

And that, in itself, is wealth beyond our wildest dreams: the pearl of great price. **Jesus himself**.