

Reflection

By Deacon Bill Austin

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Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Prv 9:1-6

Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven columns; she has dressed her meat, mixed her wine, yes, she has spread her table. She has sent out her maidens; she calls from the heights out over the city: "Let whoever is simple turn in here; To the one who lacks understanding, she says, Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed! Forsake foolishness that you may live; advance in the way of understanding."

Eph 5:15-20

Brothers and sisters: Watch carefully how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most of the opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord. And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.

Jn 6:51-58

Jesus said to the crowds: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

Reflection

Today's readings call us to "Forsake foolishness that you may live." In this day and age of materialism and greed this is excellent advice. But as members of a society that exists primarily on consumerism how do we forsake the foolishness? The resent "Cash for Clunkers" program offered by the government fuels the materialistic culture by luring people to purchase new cars. While this certainly will stir the economy in the short term, our children and grand children will need to deal with the long term results.

So how do we forsake the foolishness? How do we "Watch carefully how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most of the opportunity?" It isn't easy but we do have help.

Paul invites us "do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord." He tells us to give "thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father." In other words, to focus more on our dependence of God, who is the source and provider of all we have. The support we need to do this is

right here in the community of believers of Our Lady of Grace. Together as a parish we support each other in our constant challenge to live as people of wisdom in a world of foolishness. And that help has its source in the Eucharist.

Jesus tells us "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever." The life that Jesus offers us in the Eucharist is not the foolishness of the world but the wisdom of God. For those of us who "eat this bread and drink this cup" remain in him as he remains in us. The community of Our Lady of Grace and, indeed, the community of the entire Catholic Church remain connected to each other and support each other because of the presence of Christ in the Sacred Bread and Blessed Cup we share.

By being part of the community each Sunday and receiving the "living bread that came down from heaven" we make the "most of the opportunity" to change our foolishness into wisdom.