

Homily
June 15, 2025
The Most Holy Trinity
22:14 – 32:57

Do you like hymns? H-Y-M-N-s? It's an ancient form, that often is put to music. "Hymn texts." We sing them a lot here. You can interchange the tune with different texts, which makes it a lot easier to sing because we don't have to learn a new melody.

Today we have heard from Proverbs Chapter 8, part of a Hymn to Wisdom. Now, Proverbs as a book was probably put together, or at least considered, during the monarchic period. That is the time of the Kings in Israel. But they drew forth from three centuries before of understanding of what and who Wisdom is. And it was all finally compiled, probably after the exile.

So the community of faith over centuries was a part of the formulation of the understanding of Wisdom.

In the Book of Proverbs there are two major focal points. The first is "How to live in harmony, one with another." That is, how to live out the Covenant that was given to them on Sinai. The book has many "pithy" sayings, two-liners, some that are easily instructive to us. And some are like, "What?!" because the metaphors of that time are not the metaphors of today. But still, with a little study, we can figure them out. And they, too, can help guide us in how to be in harmony with each other.

The other focal point is the "Theological Understanding of Wisdom." Our reading today is a part of the Hymn to Wisdom. There are two basic points it gave us. Wisdom was present with God at the beginning. And Wisdom participated in the exercise of making God's plan come about.

She existed before all things. And when God planned and created the universe, adorning it with beauty and variety, and establishing its wonderful order, she was there. The pre-existence of Woman Wisdom with God is developed in Sirach Chapter 24. It's 29 verses long, and well worth the read.

Sirach Chapter 24, is like the part of the hymn that we heard today.

Wisdom, not only in the reading we heard today, but also in Sirach, speaks in the First Person, describing her origin, her dwelling place in Israel and the reward she gives her followers. She expands the last line of our reading today. "And I delight in human beings."

She delights in human beings. And it's very clear that she is God's friend. She is intimate with him and invites human beings to a similar relationship to God through her. That's true throughout the Wisdom literature.

Well, just as the understanding of Wisdom took centuries, the understanding of "Trinity," was a process over time. From Jesus speaking of the Father and the Spirit. Through the disciples experiencing them in the ministry of Jesus. And then having the Spirit come upon them at Pentecost. The understanding began to unfold.

Jesus played a particular role in this development. In some ways he is described in the New Testament, through the lens of Wisdom Chapter 8, our reading, and Sirach Chapter 24.

Paul especially sees Jesus through the lens of Wisdom.

I Corinthians Chapter 1, "Christ, the power of God and the Wisdom of God." And in Colossians Chapter 1, verses 15-17, "Christ is the Firstborn of all Creation, in whom were created all things in heaven and on earth. He is before all things."

And then there's John, Chapter 1. Those of us who are older know it as the "Last Gospel," at the end of Mass. Remember that? It was always on the left side of the altar. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. In the beginning he was present when all things were made." It sounds a lot like the Wisdom description, doesn't it?

So our ancestors saw and heard and began to share.

What's interesting and very important is the relatedness of the Three Persons of the Trinity. It's essential to who we are as Christians.

Now, the Church's growing understanding and lived experience eventually developed into the doctrine of the Trinity in Credal Statements. We have already expressed one at the very beginning, did we not? (*Making the Sign of the Cross*) We're baptized into the Trinity, or through the Trinity.

And then, we proclaimed the "Glory to God," a hymn from somewhere between the 5th or 6th centuries, proclaiming God, Father and Spirit. And then the Nicene Creed. This year, 2025, is the 1700th anniversary of the formulation of the "Nicene Creed." It took over 3 centuries to develop the understanding we proclaim each week!

This year might be a good time for each of us to explore that Creed a little more deeply. Credal formulas are for the head. They are attempts to state our understanding as a Church. They are, "Faith Seeking Understanding."

But the Trinity, my brothers and sisters, is more than something for our heads to grasp. They are more than "to be understood." The Trinity is about the heart for us believers. The intimate love relationship of Father, Son and Spirit tells us of the reason for our Creation, our Redemption in Jesus Christ and why the Spirit breathes on us as individuals and as a Church.

It's all rooted in that **Hesed**, that constant love that God is and reveals. Our origin and life are from God's infinite love. And we as individual believers are to reveal that love each day of our lives. The Church exists to reveal that love, not only to believers, but to the World.

Think about it. When we live the love in Christ Jesus, sent by the Father, who then sent the Spirit, we are revealing God. And in a particular way, Father, Son and Spirit. We are the evangelizers of an understanding, but more so of an intimate relationship.

So brothers and sisters, let us honor the gift we have received.