

September 7, 2025



STEP BY STEP, PRAYER BY PRAYER

By Elisabeth Beall

Today's First Reading

*Who can know God's counsel,
or who can conceive what the LORD intends?
For the deliberations of mortals are timid,
and unsure are our plans.
For the corruptible body burdens the soul
and the earthen shelter weighs down the mind that has many concerns.
And scarce do we guess the things on earth,
and what is within our grasp we find with difficulty;
but when things are in heaven, who can search them out?
Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had given wisdom
and sent your holy spirit from on high?
And thus were the paths of those on earth made straight.*

WISDOM 9:13-18b

Reflection

My immediate reaction to today's First Reading was, "Wow – this writer really gets it."

Being human – knowing that I am a part of creation that God chose to make – is a gift so great I can't begin to comprehend it. But that doesn't mean it's easy!

As limited as we all are, compared to God's greatness, we are still so complex – physically, emotionally, spiritually. I can't always fathom the motivations of others, even the people I know well. I can't always prevent a well-laid plan from going awry, no matter how many supporters it has. In this, of course, I am not alone. As the writer so beautifully puts it: "scarce do we guess the things on earth, and what is within our grasp we find with difficulty."

And this is only taking the dear neighbor into consideration! None of us can conceive what God intends, as the writer points out here; we know that "all things work for good for those who love God" (Romans 8:28), but sometimes it feels like it takes a very long time to get to that point.

While I appreciate the commiseration of these verses, I also find hope within them. It's true I can't read God's mind or guess how the good can come out of a terrible situation, but I can talk with God about these questions – about anything I don't understand. In prayerful conversation, perhaps I can come to an improved understanding of the people around me or the situations in which I find myself; certainly I can find a source of peace to handle the challenges of life in this world.

Step by step, prayer by prayer, I can have faith that the paths of those on earth may be made just a little straighter – or perhaps I should say: I have faith that at last, I may see the straightness of the paths that, to my faulty eye, looked rough and misaligned.



Photo by Frans van Heerden

For Pondering

- When your mind is filled with deliberations or many concerns, what do you do to find peace? How does this period of feeling overwhelmed impact your prayer life?
- Reread the excerpt from the Book of Wisdom slowly, first silently, and then aloud. Which phrases or lines resonated with you, where you are in your life right now? Close your eyes and reflect on those words.

For Prayer

*Almighty God,
author of my life,
help me learn to read what you have written on my heart.
Give me discerning eyes
and an untiring spirit
to look within me
in order to understand how to reach outside of me.
And once I have begun to read you aright,
give me the generosity to help others to read you,
to sound you out one letter,*

one word of radical giving at a time.

[WITH THANKS TO JESUITRESOURCE.ORG](https://jesuitresource.org)

If you enjoy reading our reflections and would like to make a donation towards this ministry, click the button below!

Support CSD



Center for
Spiritual
Development

COMPANIONS ON THE
SACRED JOURNEY



Visit Website

714-744-3172

Join Mailing
List



To “Unsubscribe” from the daily reflections while remaining on our general mailing list, please [email us](#). The unsubscribe function below will unsubscribe you from all emails from CSD. Please know we will never share your information.

Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street | Orange, CA 92868 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)