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Daily Reflections

Photo by Sr. Karin Nürnberg, CSJ, from the Abbey St. Hildegard in Eibingen, Germany

DISCERNING THE THOUGHTS OF THE HEART

By Sr. Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

Today's Readings

*I prayed, and prudence was given me;
I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.
I preferred her to scepter and throne,
and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her,
nor did I liken any priceless gem to her;
because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand,
and before her, silver is to be accounted mire.
Beyond health and comeliness I loved her,
and I chose to have her rather than the light,
because the splendor of her never yields to sleep.
Yet all good things together came to me in her company,
and countless riches at her hands.*

WISDOM 7:7-11

Brothers and sisters: Indeed the word of God is living and effective, sharper

than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.

HEBREWS 4:12-13

*As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." **Jesus, looking at him, loved him** and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.*

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

MARK 10:17-27

Reflection

The First Reading today is taken from **Wisdom**, the last of the Old Testament books, part of the Apocrypha. The verses quoted above refer to King Solomon's prayer for wisdom in 1 Kings 3:6-9, when God appeared to Solomon in a dream and invited the young king to ask for anything he desired. Solomon responded, "*Give your servant an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil.*" God was pleased that Solomon asked for a discerning heart rather than for a long life or riches. The prayer quoted in the First Reading above is a description of the wisdom that Solomon desired. The poetry of the Book of Wisdom is exquisite and helps one to pray for the gift of wisdom, a treasure worth more than all the riches of the world. If you read the rest of Chapter 7, you will find a further description of wisdom's 21 attributes:

she, Sophia, reflects the goodness of God and helps us to become friends of God.

The Second Reading is taken from **Hebrews**, an anonymous treatise, possibly written for Jewish or Gentile Christians. In these two short verses, it seems that the *word of God* is referring to the *Word of God incarnate in Jesus*. It is the Word of God who speaks to our hearts and invites us to be faithful. The Word of God is alive and active, working deeply within us to bring us to wholeness. God knows us like no other being can know us – nothing is hidden, not even the innermost thoughts of our heart. This is where discernment takes place.

Today's **Gospel from Mark 10** tells the story of a young man who wanted to inherit eternal life. Jesus looked at him and loved him: Jesus invited him to follow Jesus' way of life, but the young man's wealth prevented him from giving all to Jesus, the Wisdom of God. He turned away sadly -- yet I always wondered if, later, he discerned Jesus' invitation and received the grace to come back to Jesus.



Man Standing in Grass Field
Photo by Martin Péchy

For Pondering and Prayer

- King Solomon prayed, and the spirit of wisdom was given to him. This prayer could be mine too: *May I have the wisdom that comes from you, God, so I will*

discern the right way to serve you.

- Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, was a scientist and a mystic. He said, “God is vibrant ... and makes way into the very marrow of my material substance. God is at work within life.” When have I experienced the Word of God penetrating my soul, speaking to me deeply? How did I respond?
 - In the Gospel, Jesus looked at the man and loved him. As Jesus looks at me now, and loves me, what is my response to him?
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