



August 19, 2012 Twentieth Sunday of Ordinary Time

"Wisdom has built her house... 'Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed!'"—Wisdom 9:1-6:

Dear Friends;

Does God have a feminine side?

The author of the Book of Wisdom seems to think so. Wisdom is seen as God's Divine Feminine escort. She has the business and communication savvy as Oprah. She is able to make her home beautiful and welcoming like Martha Stewart. She can cook like the Barefoot Contessa or Julia Child. She is as clever as Ellen DeGeneres. She is pictured as the confidante of God and the way into God's heart.

Recent biblical archeology indicates that some ancient Israelites thought God had a wife. If God did have a wife it would be Lady Wisdom. The meal she offers makes us intimate companions of God—the All Holy One. Her invitation to dine on her meal of understanding and right reason is the choice between life and death. Do we join her banquet or do we accept the invitation to Folly's banquet of self-seeking that goes nowhere? Or do we choose the banquet of everlasting life sharing in self-giving love.

Does Jesus have a feminine side?

Istanbul (formerly Constantinople) was the capital of the Byzantine Empire. It was the center of the Christian Greek-speaking world of the Eastern Mediterranean. The emperor's church and the seat of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople is a church that still is a marvel of the ancient world. Completed in AD 537 it is named as the *Church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) of God*. It is dedicated in honor of the birth of the Divine Logos (Word) in Jesus Christ. The dedication was on December 25 the feast of Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Christians have seen the attributes of Lady Wisdom in the Word of God who is Jesus Christ. Wisdom we could say is the feminine side of Jesus. Like Lady Wisdom, Jesus invites us to choose life. The meal that he has prepared is the very gift of his life.

The language that is used in the passage from John (6:51-58) today is graphic. Eating human flesh and drinking blood is a 'in your face' image. This is why people reacted strongly as if he was speaking of cannibalism. It is language that is used to describe intimate relationship. Just as Jesus has life because of the Father so also those who have an intimate connection with Jesus through faith will live in him—forever.

Normally when we eat food becomes part of us. However, the food that Jesus gives (his life) the opposite occurs. We become part of him. We become the Bread of Life. Jesus continues his Incarnation by taking flesh in us.

Often times we think of Jesus as dead and in the past. Yes sure, we believe that he has risen but he is in heaven now with all our beloved dead. But Eucharist teaches us something else. The Risen Jesus continues his presence among us through the gift of Eucharist.

Jesus is not a past event but a present reality who lives now. John's Gospel tells us that Eucharist is how he continues that presence in and among us. So do we accept him through that gift? St Ignatius of Antioch bishop and martyr (AD 35-108) expressed his desire this way "I desire 'the bread of God' which is the flesh of Jesus Christ...and for drink I desire his blood." May we always hunger for Wisdom's banquet where we are nourished by Jesus the Bread of Life!

Peace,

Fr. Ron