

Readings for Sunday, August 18, 2024

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: Proverbs 9:1-6

Wisdom is portrayed as a woman who invites people to partake of her banquet. Just as ordinary food is necessary for physical life, Wisdom's food—insight and understanding—is necessary for fullness of life with God. Partaking of Wisdom's banquet is the way to life.

¹Wisdom has built her house,
she has hewn her seven pillars.

²She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine,
she has also set her table.

³She has sent out her young serving women, she calls
from the highest places in the town,

⁴“You that are simple, turn in here!”
To those without sense she says,

⁵“Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.

⁶Lay aside immaturity,
and live, and walk in the way of insight.”

Psalm: Psalm 34:9-14

Those who seek the Lord lack nothing that is good. (Ps. 34:10)

⁹Fear the Lord, you saints | of the Lord,
for those who fear the | Lord lack nothing.

¹⁰**The lions are in want and | suffer hunger,
but those who seek the Lord lack nothing | that is good. R**

¹¹Come, children, and lis- | ten to me;
I will teach you reverence | for the Lord.

¹²**Who among you takes plea- | sure in life
and desires long life to en- | joy prosperity?**

¹³Keep your | tongue from evil
and your lips from | lying words.

¹⁴**Turn from evil | and do good;
seek peace | and pursue it. R**

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:15-20

True wisdom integrates our new reality in Christ with our Christian fellowship and daily conduct. Because we are filled with the Spirit, Christians regularly rejoice together, give thanks to God for one another, and care for one another. In this way we revere our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, ²⁰giving thanks to God, the Father, at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel: John 6:51-58

In John's gospel, the feeding of the five thousand leads to extended teaching in which Jesus identifies himself as the true "bread of life." Finally, in these verses, he makes a connection that would not be understood until after his death, in light of the church's celebration of holy communion.

[Jesus said,] ⁵¹"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

⁵²The Judeans then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son-of-Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."