

## Preamble

In the Old Testament Book of Kings, two mothers living in the same house, each the mother of an infant son, come to King Solomon. One of the babies had been smothered, and each claimed the remaining boy as her own. Calling for a sword, Solomon declared his WISE judgment, a gift given only by God: the baby would be cut in two, each woman to receive half. One mother did not contest the ruling, declaring that if she could not have the baby then neither of them could, but the other begged Solomon, "Give the baby to her, just don't kill him!" Solomon knew at once who was the real mother.

### Homily 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wisdom is a gift of The Holy Spirit, together with understanding and good counsel. My Mum was a wise counsellor. She would WISELY tell us: 'If all were known, all would be forgiven.'; 'Pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on you.'; 'Don't judge people because you never know what's round the corner.' My Dad, equally wise would counsel us, 'If you have to look over your shoulder, don't do it!'

In today's First Reading, in The Sacred Liturgy, Cyrus is called by name and is called God's anointed, in Hebrew *mashiach*. This is a title that had been reserved thus far for Israel's kings, priests and prophets; and it will be the title of the promised Redeemer-Messiah. However, in this case, the title is being given to a pagan, a foreign ruler who does not know Yahweh (verses 4-5) but who God will endow with powers to bring about God's divine plan for The Chosen People's return to the Promised Land. Cyrus is the only non-Israelite to receive the title "messiah." So, clearly God, in His divine WISDOM, uses a Gentile, a non-believer to fulfil his work of salvation.

Wise responses are often required when you are put on the spot or when people are trying to trick you into saying something you might regret. I was once asked by a persistent and stropky student/teenager, 'Well Mr Murphy I bet even you can't prove that God exists.' to which from nowhere my response came, 'Daniel when I look into your eyes, I know that there is a God.' A WISE Holy Spirit inspired response to a tricky question. Jesus in The Gospel is asked by the Jewish leaders, 'Is it proper to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' A 'yes' would upset the Jews, a 'no' would anger the Romans. Jesus was aware of their malice and WISELY replied, 'You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trick me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.' Jesus in his response to their skullduggery demonstrates a WISDOM that can only come from God, The Holy Spirit.

God's wisdom is not always easy to follow or comfortable for the disciple. Perhaps we can reflect on these wise words of Jesus as a barometer of how seriously we follow The Master:

- The Spirit of The Lord is upon me, he has anointed me to bring GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR Are the poor our focus and priority?

- You ARE the salt of the earth, but if salt loses its taste nothing can make it salty again. Am I watering down my Christian commitment?
- You ARE the light of the world. No-one lights a lamp and covers it. Do I visibly stand up for my faith?
- You have heard it said, “Thou shalt not kill” but I say anyone who gets angry with or insults a brother/sister is already committing murder. Do I take this seriously?
- You have heard it said, “Do not commit adultery”, but I say, if you look at a woman/man lustfully you are already committing adultery. Am I “pure in heart?”
- If someone strikes you on the right cheek, offer the left as well. Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you. Or am I just like the rest?
- If you give to the poor do not let your left hand know what your right is doing. When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret. When you fast do not put on a miserable face as the hypocrites do... wash your face and look cheerful. Do I prefer to trumpet and boast about my “good works?”
- Do not store up treasure here in earth where moth and rust destroy it. Store up treasure with God. Where is my treasure, is it with God?
- Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do I take the plank out of my own eye before I take the splinter from my neighbour’s?
- Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord will enter The Kingdom of heaven but the one who DOES the will of My Father. Do I walk the talk?

The wisdom of God does indeed go “beyond all human understanding”. The BIG question is, “John, are you up for the challenge of authentic discipleship as outlined in God’s wisdom expressed by Jesus and inspired by The Holy Spirit? My response has to be, “On my own I can do nothing, but I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”