

**St. Sebastian, Milwaukee**  
**Cycle B 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 10, 2021**

Reflections offered by Mike Kamenski

**1. MUSIC**

**“Call of Wisdom”** by Will Todd

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6uVVZlUfWs>

Music Notes: Inspired by today’s first reading from and about Wisdom, this selection features the children’s choir at St. Paul’s Cathedral in England. The musical composition is haunting and evocative. The video of the children adds delight and depth to this artistic expression of God’s Holy Wisdom, present HERE, with us! Are we listening? Do we hear??? (lyrics listed below)

Lyrics:

Lord of wisdom, lord of truth, lord of justice, lord of mercy.  
Walk beside us down the years, 'till we see you in your glory.  
Striving to attain the heights.  
Turning in a new direction.  
Entering a lonely place.  
Welcoming a friend or stranger.  
I am here, I am with you.  
I have called, do you hear me?  
I am here, I am here, I am with you.  
Silver is of passing worth (Silver), gold is not of constant value.  
Jewels sparkle for a while.  
What you long for is not lasting.  
I am here, I am with you.  
I have called, do you hear me?  
I am here, I am here.  
I am with you.  
Rulers govern under me.  
With my insight and my wisdom.  
Those who know me know my love.  
Those who seek me find their answer.  
I am here, I am with you.  
I have called, do you hear me?  
I am here, I am here.  
I am with you ×2  
God, the father and the son.  
Holy Spirit, coeternal.  
Glory, glory, be ascribed to you.  
Now and to the end, to the end of ages.  
I am here, I am with you.

I have called, do you hear me?  
I am here, I am here.  
I am with you, with you, with you.

## **2. SPIRITUAL REFLECTION** **“Jesus’ Way of Wisdom”** By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Jesus states that he is the way that leads to life. What is this Jesus way?

Among other things, it is the way of wisdom, the way of pondering. The way of Jesus is the way of standing amid all delight, joy, contradiction, ambiguity, division, and complexity with a heart and a faith big enough to somehow hold it all. Jesus’ way is the way of holding things.

When we are amazed, we are not wise and we hold nothing together.

Part of this can be understood by looking at its opposite. The opposite of the way of wisdom, scripture tells us, the way of holding things, is the way of amazement. Time and time again, the crowds following Jesus are described as being amazed at what he says and does. Always they are chided for it: “don’t be amazed!” Jesus says. Amazement is not what Jesus wants and it is never something that does us good.

Why? Is it not good to be amazed? Yes, amazement can be good, if it is the act of a child where amazement is wonder, agnosis, a stunning of the intellect into silence and a sense of its own limits. That is good, but that is rarely true in adults. For us, normally amazement is not wonder, but cheerleading, and invariably we end up hating what formerly amazed us. The same persons who were amazed at Jesus and who tried to make him King would, not long afterwards, shout: “Crucify him!” What we are amazed at we will eventually try to crucify, as every celebrity soon learns. Amazement is the opposite of wisdom.

If amazement is bad, and the opposite of wisdom, what is good and what is wisdom?

Pondering and helplessness, these are wisdom. We see an example of this in Mary, Jesus’ mother. She is never amazed. When others are amazed she goes off and instead, silently, ponders things in her heart.

This is also true of the disciples of Jesus, though only on occasion. Normally, like the crowds, they are amazed and need some prodding. This Jesus tries to provide. One such example happens after Jesus’ exchange with the rich young man.

Jesus asks him to give up everything and follow him, but the young man is unable to do so. He goes away sad. Jesus then turns to his disciples and says: “I tell you that it is harder for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.” How do the disciples react?

They are not amazed. There are no wows, no cheerleading, no congratulating Jesus on how wonderful he is. No. They are stunned: “If that is the case, then who can go to heaven?” Paraphrased that might read: “If that is the case, then we are all in deep trouble!” Jesus’ answer brings them face to face with their own helplessness, their poverty, their limits, and to the searing realization that they do not really have things figured out, as they think they have. And that paralysis is good since it forces them to wonder, to again take on the helplessness of the child.

When we are amazed, we are not wise and we hold nothing together. In amazement, we fall prey to every kind of superficiality, novelty, trick, and one-sided ideology. Amazement is the unrecognized face of fundamentalism, the antithesis of wisdom. The way of amazement is the way of fundamentalism, the way of letting one piece, or person, be the whole.

And the way of amazement is everywhere: we look at our sports heroes, our rock stars, and all kinds of other pop celebrities and we say: “wow. Be my King! Be my Queen!” Soon enough we also say: “Crucify him! Crucify her!”

We take a first course in something (psychology, theology, liturgy, adult education, feminism, ecology, whatever) and emerge from that initial classroom starry-eyed, newly angry at the world, devoid of compassion; in brief, amazed. We begin then to crucify a whole lot of people and things. Small wonder Alexander Pope, the poet, once suggested “a little learning is a dangerous thing.” It too easily leads to the way of amazement.

The way of wisdom is the way of pondering, the way of holding every kind of pain, suffering, delight, and contradiction long enough until it transforms you, gestates compassion within you, and brings you to your knees in a thousand surrenders.

You and I are wise and we walk the way of Jesus, even when we are so stunned by it all that, in wonder, we ask: “If that is the case, who then can be saved?”

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