

11. July 2022

Attaining wisdom

Pr 2:1-9

A reading from the memorial of Saint Benedict Abbot

My child, if you take my words to heart, if you set store by my commandments, tuning your ear to wisdom, tuning your heart to understanding, yes, if your plea is for clear perception, if you cry out for understanding, if you look for it as though for silver, search for it as though for buried treasure, then you will understand what the fear of Yahweh is, and discover the knowledge of God. For Yahweh himself is giver of wisdom, from his mouth issue knowledge and understanding. He reserves his advice for the honest, a shield to those whose ways are sound; he stands guard over the paths of equity, he keeps watch over the way of those faithful to him. Then you will understand uprightnes, equity and fair dealing, the paths that lead to happiness.

Today, on the feast of St. Benedict, we are reminded of something very important, which threatens to be increasingly lost in our time, replaced by incomparably lesser things. This is wisdom, often described as 'delightful knowledge'.

Wisdom is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is not to be confused with the knowledge we acquire through the efforts of our intellect, which is a light that does not go beyond the plane of the natural. The gift of wisdom, on the other hand, is the supernatural light of God that penetrates our spirit and our heart. Thus, this 'delightful knowledge' refers to God himself, rather than to the knowledge of his works.

Today's reading tells us that we can acquire wisdom by welcoming and internalising in our hearts the Word of God, for it is "*a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*" (Ps 119:105). Since this Word comes from God Himself (although we receive it through the mediation of persons), it enlightens us and transmits divine wisdom to us. If we allow it to enter us, the Word of God moulds us, and we learn to be guided by it.

Perhaps we can understand it in the following way: the supernatural light of the Lord is contained in the Word we receive. To the extent of our willingness and receptivity, it penetrates our inner being and begins to spread its light. Our way of thinking and our heart are touched and transformed by this light. If we assimilate the Word of God

deeply, then it will remain in us as a treasure that enlightens us unceasingly. The Spirit of God will remind us of this Word in every concrete situation that arises and needs to be enlightened by it.

Let us take an example. We read in the Letter of the Apostle James: "*Everyone should be quick to listen but slow to speak and slow to human anger*" (Jas 1:19). If we assimilate this word of Scripture deeply, our behaviour will change according to the instructions given here. If we are in danger of speaking rashly and unwisely or are in the habit of interrupting others and being impatient in listening, this word of Scripture will remind us of the attitude we should have.

Now, the word is not only a reminder and an exhortation to correct our behaviour, but it also gives us the strength to change according to God's will. Of course, it is also necessary for us to be convinced that the Word of God points us in the right direction, and that we allow ourselves to be corrected and formed by it.

We could find countless examples like this in which we experience that the Word of God illuminates a concrete situation. The more we listen and obey His Word, the more wisdom will grow.

St. Benedict, who is considered the "Father of monasticism in the West", left as a legacy to his monks the famous Benedictine rule, which is to serve as a guide for them to live according to divine wisdom. This rule begins with the words: "*Listen, my son*", recalling that listening is the indispensable prerequisite for attaining wisdom. The attitude of listening must not only be occasional; it must mark our whole life. Let us remember that in our relationship with God we are always the recipients; and if our attention is focused on Him and we seek to deepen what we receive from Him, we will bear the fruits that God has set for our life.

In relation to the theme of wisdom, I recommend watching the following video, in which I cover this last gift of the Spirit:

https://youtu.be/sBIC5pOeq_4