**Thirty-second Sunday *per annum*** Wis 6:12-16 1 Th 4:13-18
**Year A, 2026** Ps 62 Mt 25:1-13

*Election comments and comments on wisdom*

I am not a political commentator, but a scriptural commentator. However, in light of this week's election, I want to offer only three thoughts about the election.

1. I'm glad the results were received peacefully and that there is little talk that the election was fraudulent. We Americans have, thus far, shown ourselves admirable in our commitment to free and fair elections, without baseless and fantastical recriminations of rigged outcomes.
2. I'm glad the gerrymandering backfired. Do not read this as my being glad that the Republicans lost or that the Democrats benefitted. No. In a homily in September of last year, I expressed my conviction that all gerrymandering is morally wrong and profoundly undemocratic. That it failed (this time) in its intended goal – irrespective of party – is what gladdens me. It is my hope that national legislation will soon be passed to ban all politically-motivated gerrymandering, ensuring a more fair and just electoral system.
3. I'm sad about voter turnout, especially in Louisiana, where, as of 2024, only 66 percent of eligible voters are registered to vote. We're the second worst in the nation, just behind Arkansas (64.7%). To make matters more discouraging, under 50 percent

of registered voters actually voted in the recent election. That means that around 32 percent of all eligible voters determined our elections. In other words, 68 percent of eligible voters in Louisiana did not vote in this past Tuesday's election. *A landslide victory for apathy and disengagement!* For a democracy, this kind of indifference and non-involvement is a civic *sin*, and it creates an ethos that is harmful to the spirit of participatory democracy. Where is the civic-mindedness of our people, of our citizens?

This seems to me to be fertile ground for action, even by churches and church groups, that might rightly engage in non-partisan efforts simply to get people to vote, to encourage engagement in the civic and political life of our community, our state, and our nation. Democracy is like a muscle. If you don't use it, you'll lose it. Voter apathy will turn into democratic atrophy. And if our republic atrophies, it will lose its democratic character and become something much more sinister. Historically, democracies devolve into tyranny, oligarchy, or mob rule.

That said, I now return to biblical commentary and want to reflect, briefly, on an idea that arises from our first reading from the book of Wisdom, which speaks about how wisdom is perceived and found and made known by those who love wisdom, and seek wisdom, and desire wisdom.

There is great wisdom to be found in handling this passage of scripture with care and attention. But to do that, we'll have to read

the passage over and over again. We'll have to pay attention to what the words mean, to how the sentences hang together to express a thought, to bring understanding to the mind. In a world where reading is on the decline and attention spans are formed and trained by social media short videos, this may be very difficult for some, for many. But the rewards are great for those who persevere.

In a cursory reading of this passage from Wisdom we discover themes that are common in the scriptures, especially in the gospels and in the words of the Lord Jesus: seeking and finding; watching, waiting, keeping vigil. Very quickly we understand that these are things that we must do: we must seek and watch and wait. This is the expected takeaway, and it is valuable. But it only scratches the surface.

We should not be content with such a first-level understanding. If we keep seeking, watching, waiting, we will be rewarded with a deeper understanding: we will find, and see, and discover. But this is hard. Hard because it means more work. More seeking, watching, waiting; more thinking, pondering, praying. And let's be honest. We're kind of lazy, kind of like the foolish bridesmaids in the gospel parable, who grabbed their lamps, but didn't take the time to think things through, and so brought along no oil for their lamps. They were too impatient, or distracted, or careless, or adverse to the hard work of thinking things through and planning adequately. And so they missed out, and in a big way.

And so we, too, might miss out, and in a big way, if we do not stick with the words and sentences of our first reading, by seeking, watching, waiting for something more: a deeper understanding, a fuller revealing of the mystery of God's word. And so with patience and perseverance, we read the passage again, attentive, trying to understand what is being communicated. And after a while, we notice something.

This reading does not merely encourage *us* to seek, to watch, to be vigilant. It also shows that wisdom, personified as *"she,"* is also active in this process. Wisdom wants to be found by those who seek her. Wisdom *"hastens to make herself known"* to those who desire her even before they can articulate their desire. It is as if she already knows our hearts and minds. Wisdom suddenly appears, *"sitting by [the] gate"* of the one watching for her. Wisdom *"makes her own rounds,"* actively looking for those who are worthy of her, to free them from care, to be gracious to them, to meet them in their need with all her attentions.

In the book of Wisdom, wisdom is somehow mysteriously part of God, *"a pure emanation of glory of the Almighty," "the refulgence of eternal light"* (Wis 7:25, 26). Theologically, wisdom so personified in the Old Testament points to the Holy Spirit or to Christ, who have not yet come into the world, who are not yet fully revealed. In the New Testament, both Christ and the Spirit are sometimes called wisdom or are connected to wisdom (1 Cor 1:24, 30; 1 Cor 12:8; Heb 1:3; Is 11:2).

Now this passage begins to yield a deeper understanding of the divine mystery to us as we hold fast in reading, seeking, watching, waiting. What we learn and discover is this: God himself – personified as wisdom – as we seek, wait, and watch for him is seeking, waiting, watching for us. God is looking for some responsiveness on our part that we want to know him, to love him, to find him, to be with him. And once God detects that in our hearts, God is quick to act, to show himself to us.

And so it is now up to us, who have been given this knowledge, to act accordingly. We must not be inattentive, or careless, or negligent, like the foolish bridesmaids, for God is seeking us out. God is coming, to be near hearts that desire to be near to him, to show himself to eyes that long to see him, to reveal himself to minds that wish to know him. We know this now, for the scriptures teach it, and so now we must act and ready ourselves: waiting on God, watching for God, seeking God out. This is *"the perfection of prudence."* This is wisdom. Be attentive!