

The readings chosen by the Church for this 32 Sunday of the year are readings that should evoke within us a question of what it means to be foolish versus what it means to be wise.

The Gospel gives us a clear example of those two qualities.

We have today a very neat, concise parable.

10 Bridesmaids....10 Torches.

Five have oil...five don't.

Five are prepared...five aren't.

Five are wise....Five are foolish.

The lesson to us is obvious....

We are to be ready.

We are to be prepared.

We are to be wise.

However, there's a catch,

because wisdom, in this day and age, is not easy to define.

For example,

Some years back I read about a pastor of a storefront Church in Chicago.

At one time he had a congregation of about 10.

A couple of families in the Church had an argument

and both left the congregation, leaving him with just three members.

Two of them moved; the third died.

And so for the past ten years,

this pastor has been preaching every Sunday to an empty Church.

A reporter was alerted to this and interviewed the pastor.

They asked him if he felt foolish.

"Foolish? No, I don't feel foolish. I'm just taking it one day at a time, waiting for someone to show up...who knows? It might be the Lord."

Is this man foolish or is he wise?

What about the 82 year-old homeless women I recently read about?

When people tried to connect her to available public assistance,

She told them she didn't want it or need it.

She said she preferred to live off "whatever came her way."

One day she stated in her broken English

that she was on the fifth day of 40 day fast for the good of the world.

Hearing this, a social worker immediately decided that she needed

a psychological evaluation, which the woman was put through.

When the evaluations were over the psychologist said that there was nothing wrong with her....other than she was obsessed with God.

Was she a supremely wise "fool for Christ" or just a crazy old woman?

Those examples are a bit removed from our everyday life, but this one isn't.

How about the parents who continue to let their adult children live with them even when they know their children are doing things they don't approve of?

Maybe it's drugs, maybe it's a refusal to get a job,

Whatever the cause, their behavior continually disrupts the household.

But because of their love for them, the parents let them stay.

Foolish or wise?

Is it crazy or is it unconditional love?

And what about the parents who in the identical situation

refuses to allow the behavior and kicks the adult child out of the house?

Foolish or wise?

Today's Gospel implies that we are to be wise,

but as you can see wisdom is not always easily defined.

The waters of wisdom are often muddied by circumstances of life.

Perhaps then.... this wisdom our readings speak of today is not defined by

any specific, individual action as much as it is found in a general

openness....an openness to God; an openness to God's Spirit:

An openness deeper than any one decision we make.

The wise person today is not the one who seems to have all the answers,  
for none of us has all the answers.

No, wisdom is not in having the answers,  
but in being willing to ask the questions.

**Wisdom is found in choosing to enter into the journey.**

**Searching for the sensible thing.**

**Searching for the wise thing.**

**Searching for God.**

I think that's what the first reading implies when it says:

Resplendent and unfading is Wisdom.

She is readily perceived by those who love her,  
and is **FOUND** by those who seek her.

To be wise....to be sensible....in this world,  
is to know that you don't have to have all the answers;  
To be able to admit that, like everyone else,  
you too are searching.

Indeed, we need to search for wisdom...  
the wisdom found in walking with God.

A man preaching to an empty Church.

An old woman obsessed with God.

A savior hanging on a tree.

Foolish or wise???? You decide.