

## Wisdom Cuts Through Everything

**Wis. 7: 7-11; Ps. 90; Heb. 4: 12-13; Mk. 10: 17-30**

In the Japanese martial arts, such as judo or karate, the aspiring student is taught by a *sensei* or teacher. Actually, the term *sensei* denotes a master rather than merely a teacher. A teacher might provide knowledge such as how to stand, how to move, and how to perform various techniques to attack or defend. But a *sensei* goes further and dispenses wisdom on strategies and tactics for applying these techniques in confrontations and also in other areas of the student's life. In the master-student relationship, the master reveals wisdom only when he knows that the student is ready to receive it and not simply when the student asks for it.

Wisdom is different than knowledge. Knowledge is useful but wisdom is beyond price. As the unknown author of the Book of Wisdom put it: wisdom is to be preferred over sceptres and thrones, wealth, health, beauty, and even over light. For, if one has wisdom, all of these things will naturally accompany it. We have only to think of the example of Solomon.

In the Gospel, a rich man approaches Jesus calling Him 'Good Teacher' and asking how he can inherit eternal life. Jesus, acting as a good teacher, points the man toward the Ten Commandments. He teaches him the basic tools and techniques to live a good and upright life. The man responds that he knows these commandments and has followed them throughout his life. But he feels that there is still more that he must do for his own salvation. He asks Jesus to impart to him wisdom that goes beyond what he already knows.

Jesus moves from being a teacher and becomes a master. The man has asked Jesus for wisdom and, even though He knows that the man is not yet ready to receive it, Jesus looks at the man with love and gives him what he asked for. Sure enough, after hearing that he needs to sell all he has, donate the money to the poor, and follow Jesus, he walks away with a heavy heart. He was not ready to take this final step, to let go of everything and to put his faith totally in God.

Paul, in the Second Reading says that: "The word of God is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Jesus knew that His words would cut the man and lay him bare. His inability to give up everything to follow Jesus would be exposed. But, at the man's insistence, Jesus revealed His wisdom to him.

We might think that this is the end of the story for the rich man, that he will never be able to be saved. But Jesus holds out hope for him and for all of us saying: 'For humans it is impossible, but not for God, for God all things are possible.' We simply have to appeal to the mercy of God and He will grant us the necessary graces to follow Jesus.

Perhaps we feel that our situation in life does not allow us to give up everything. But we would do well to think about what is holding us back from trusting totally in Christ. What are we having trouble letting go of? Perhaps we can start by giving up one thing. Let us meditate on this Gospel, with the hope of growing in faith day by day so that, with God's help, we will be able to follow Jesus more and more closely.