**Wisdom and the Holy Trinity**

 **Two readings today are on the Wisdom of Solomon, and both readings acknowledge wisdom as a woman. Our first reading says, “Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who seek her.” It also says, “…she goes about seeking those worthy of her, and she graciously appears to them in their paths and meets them in every thought.” I think the whole first reading from Solomon could be read over and over again reminding us that wisdom is a woman.**

**There are so many stories of women in the Bible who are filled with wisdom. In the 12th century B,C, , now known as before the Common Era, Deborah was one of the first women warriors and she was also a judge. Some people thought of Deborah as the mother of Israel. Another story is about a poor slave woman named Hagar who bore Abraham’s first son before Sarah conceived. Sarah was so jealous of Hagar she had Abraham cast her into the wilderness. This was a terrible fate for Hagar and her son because they could have died in that hot, relentless wilderness without the help of an angel.**

**In the Bible there are so many wonderful stories of women that often get overlooked or simply changed to fit other scenarios. Like the Mother of Jesus being called a virgin all her life and the possible children she may have given birth to passed off as step-brothers and sisters or cousins. One of the worst switches of a special Biblical woman’s reputation is what happened to Mary Magdalene in the seventh century when she was branded as a prostitute. Imagine the first person to see Jesus after his resurrection being called a prostitute. For a very long time homes for unwed mothers were called Magdalene houses. Those two versions of women misconstrued from the Bible are examples of how women of the Bible have been overlooked, or their stories changed. When Mary the mother of Jesus is remembered as a virgin and Mary Magdalene as a prostitute it doesn’t leave us a whole lot of room for us, ladies. We can either be virgins or prostitutes, and we all know these two stereotypes** are **not an accurate picture of most of the women in the world.**

### There’s another overlooked feminine figure in the Bible that is vital to our whole Christian belief system of the Trinity. Many Biblical scholars think of the Holy Spirit as a feminine figure. The following lovely lines about the Holy Spirit are from 1 Corinthians, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him,” – these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit, “for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.” If we can comprehend The Holy Spirit as the feminine figure within the Trinity, it becomes a very profound thought. To think about a feminine force searching the depths of God can give a whole new meaning to the Trinity. I think it makes the Trinity a richer, deeper reality when the Holy Spirit is seen as a woman. It gives a better balance to the three-in-one Trinity we don’t quite understand, but believe in anyway. After all we are male and female on this earth, so why wouldn’t it follow that at least one of the Trinity would be feminine?

###  I tried to find female images of the Holy Spirit on line. If you look at the pictures in your bulletin, you can see what I was able to find. Most of the images under feminine Holy Spirit look like female angels, or they look suspiciously like the Virgin Mary and some seem to resemble saints. But very few look like a female image of the Holy Spirit. I think it could be a whole new field for artists to explore. Just what would some images of the feminine Holy Spirit look like? I can think of a female figure with doves flying from her hands; the doves would be surrounded by a great lot of light. Somehow the feeling of fire would also be in my conception of a female Holy Spirit. Perhaps she could be standing on the flames the day the Holy Spirit appeared to the disciples. I think there could be as many possible representations of a feminine Holy Spirit as there are artists, and as many feminine representations as there are masculine images of the Holy Spirit. But right now there don’t seem to be many images representing the great opportunity of actually helping people experience the Holy Spirit as a feminine figure.

### I believe the misconstrued stories of Biblical women run from early Christianity into today. This reality gives a possible explanation of why some people, both male and female, can believe only men should be in leadership capacities in churches, while women are relegated to kitchen duty and sometimes teaching Sunday school. I do realize the historical context for these belief systems of men being far more capable of holding leadership roles than women. Yet I don’t understand the myth of one gender being superior to another surviving into the 21st century. I wonder why so many women continue to go along and believe the myth. Why a kind of second-class church membership is accepted by so many women perhaps relates to a few selected Bible verses taken out of context, and that menacing sentence, “But we’ve always done it that way.” Sometimes, incredible as it seems, both men and women can be other women’s worst enemies. Because they perpetuate a long-standing myth that men are far more able to lead than women. I believe any form of prejudice has very little to do with the reign of God. All people are meant to be equal in every way. Each gender has a great deal to offer every one of us.

### The hard part is to walk that fine line between loving all groups of people, even those we consider to be perpetuating prejudices of ancient beliefs, and still helping to bring about a more equal balance of men and women leaders within our churches and within our entire society. The only way I know to change anything is to live in the change and believe in the equality of all people. Words will never change anyone; only actions lived out in faith and hope can make a difference. Amen