Voices of Sisters



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Devastated.

This was what I felt as a 10-year-old having just found the perfect way to pray, only for it to be taken away in almost the next sentence of Scripture.

What Scripture could this be, you ask? Obviously, it's from the First Book of Kings. I mean, what other book could elicit such a response in a child?

We heard this very reading at Mass a few weeks ago, and when I heard those words, it brought me great joy to think of the passion that I held as a child so filled with hope to pray in such a way that God would help me make sense of the world around me.

It was dear Solomon who first prayed:

> but I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act.
> I serve you in the midst of the people whom you have chosen,
> a people so vast that it cannot be numbered or counted.
> Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart
> to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong.
> For who is able to govern this vast people of yours? (1 Kings 3:7-9)

What a great prayer, I thought. This is what I want! I will pray for this each and every day. I will be given these gifts, and I'll always know that I'm doing the right thing.

God's response to Solomon was, to me, earth-shattering, to say the least:

> Because you have asked for this —
> not for a long life for yourself,
> nor for riches,
> nor for the life of your enemies,
> but for understanding so that you may know what is right —
> I do as you requested.
> I give you a heart so wise and understanding
> that there has never been anyone like you up to now,
> and after you there will come no one to equal you. (1 Kings 3:11-12)

What?! What was I to do if I couldn't be wiser than Solomon? Not even as wise! That heart "so wise and understanding" belonged to Solomon and not to me. Was there any hope left? And while God most certainly was not interested in letting me copy and paste Solomon's prayer in my life, I believe the invitation to go deeper to seek wisdom and understanding was placed in the inbox of my heart. Perhaps, at this moment, I am being invited to open the link and sit in this longing.

Our communication access points are ever shifting. As a child, my mother called me a phone book because I could memorize all the phone numbers she needed. Then we got cellphones and suddenly I didn't need to know those numbers anymore (Our house recently discussed that we only really know one of the phone numbers of the sisters in our house, because we don't even see the numbers on our phone). I love being the queen of search words and yet with reels, I'm being rewired to find the image and not the word that will bring me to the source. Perhaps we are moving towards hieroglyphics.

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As we look at the world around us, we are inundated with so many things. We know this. Our lives are filled with news, media, reels, links, and emails galore. Each one with a fast headline, a quick tag and a commitment to stay three minutes or less. We know in our hearts that our high school teachers and professors knew the value of asking us to go deeper, asking us to look to sources. Still today, we see what happens when we don't. We look at AI tools seeking ease and speed, when what we receive is often incorrect (although often shaped to give us the answer we seek) and destructive to our world and our communities.

Please know, I'm the first to search out an answer on my phone, so this is as much an invitation to myself as anyone else, but what would it look like to revisit and seek wisdom from places not summarized? What if our search only leads to more questions, and more conversations? What if we don't have an answer? That's one that I think we may find especially hard, and yet we seek our God who is mystery. We lean on faith. We are called to live in hope.

What if we pause and begin to rewire ourselves for love?

We know we are not going to have the same gifts as Solomon and thankfully God has not called us to be Solomon (I hear he had a rough time). Yes, God is calling

each of us to cultivate the wisdom and understanding God knows we need for this world today.