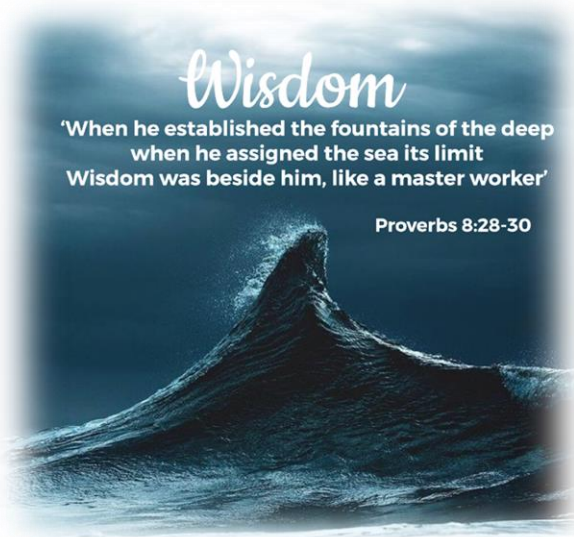


God's Word  
for this  
Week  
The Second Sunday  
before Lent



The First Reading from the Old Testament.

Proverbs 8: 1, 22-31



Does not wisdom call,

and does not understanding raise her voice?

<sup>22</sup> The Lord created me at the beginning\* of his work,\*  
the first of his acts of long ago.

<sup>23</sup> Ages ago I was set up,  
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

<sup>24</sup> When there were no depths I was brought forth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water.

<sup>25</sup> Before the mountains had been shaped,  
before the hills, I was brought forth—

<sup>26</sup> when he had not yet made earth and fields,\*  
or the world's first bits of soil.

<sup>27</sup> When he established the heavens, I was there,  
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

<sup>28</sup> when he made firm the skies above,  
when he established the fountains of the deep,  
<sup>29</sup> when he assigned to the sea its limit,  
so that the waters might not transgress his command,  
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,  
<sup>30</sup> then I was beside him, like a master worker;\*  
and I was daily his\* delight,  
rejoicing before him always,  
<sup>31</sup> rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the human race.

The words of this Psalm read like a poem. These magnificent descriptions of the creation of the world are seen by Wisdom as her place within this creation is identified. Not unlike 'the Word' described at the beginning of St. John's Gospel, which spoke all things into being, Wisdom is the intelligence and understanding that existed and was in place before the creation of the world. Perhaps Wisdom could be seen as another aspect of the Creator. Wisdom isn't simply intelligence or knowledge or even understanding. It is the ability to think and act in such a way that benefits all.

Almighty God,  
you have created the heavens and the earth  
and made us in your own image:  
Teach us to discern your hand in all your works  
and your likeness in all your children;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who with you and the Holy Spirit  
reigns supreme over all things, now and for ever.



### The Collect of the Day



The following two scriptures explain the essence of the Christ. The words of the Letter to the Colossians below identify the Christ as the 'image of the invisible God' and having existed before all creation. Reading the words below slowly and prayerfully can open the heart to receive a deeper recognition of the presence of the Christ with you today.

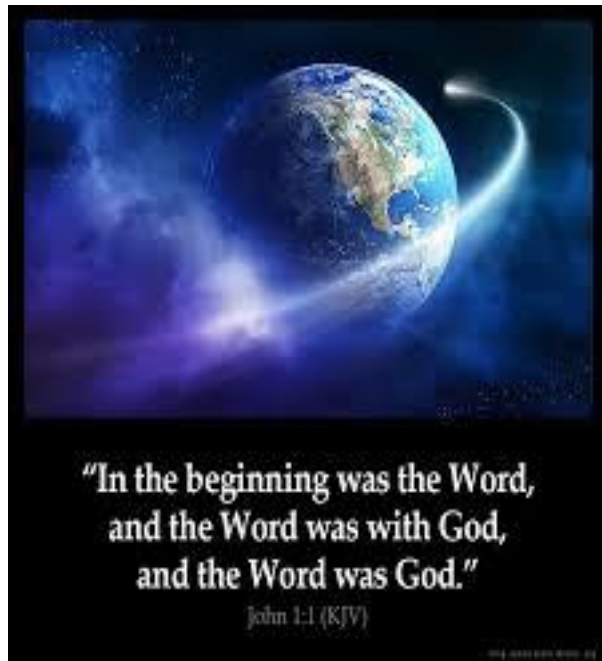
## THE EPISTLE READING

## Colossians 1: 15-20

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; <sup>16</sup>for in\* him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He himself is before all things, and in\* him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

## THE GOSPEL READING

## John 1: 1-14



<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life,\* and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.\*

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own,\* and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,\* full of grace and truth.

*Sometimes we can fall into the trap of identifying the Christ with the person of Jesus only. Today we are reminded of the origins and divinity of the Christ at the beginning of all there is and our readings are wonderfully linked one to the other. This week we have a feast of poetry in descriptions and mysticism in the life and light brought into being in the person of Jesus. At this time of year we are watchful for the changing light. This lengthening of days brings hope at a difficult time for us in this world. Although things are changing around us rapidly and unpredictably, the change of the seasons so very visible to us are constant reminders of the continuous presence of the one who created the world, came to reveal himself to us and remains with us, within us, to the end of time.*