

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year. Proverbs 9:1-6; Ephesians 5:15-20; John 6:51-58.

In Proverbs we have the image of the Wisdom of God portrayed as the great woman of a household inviting all to a feast. Lady Wisdom not only issues this invitation to everyone, especially the foolish and the ignorant, to leave folly and find wisdom in sharing a divine banquet of meat and wine. She is also the mistress-builder who has purpose-built a house for that very reason! Here is Scripture witnessing to a constant, centuries reiterated belief that what is best described as the female heart of God desires deliriously the “wisdoming” of his creation – humankind. The best image the author can find is that of a woman personifying Wisdom who builds a house in order to invite everyone to a banquet. So much has been invested in Her offer. She builds the noblest, perfect house (with ‘seven pillars’). The highest part of the city is used to issue the invitation, through her maidservants, so that all can hear. But the food and drink will sustain humanity in the wisdom and truth of real perception. Not the normal fare.

It would not be hard to see why women today might find in this parable that deepest instinct which installs them as the Wisdom of a God who says: ‘Come and eat my bread, drink the wine I have prepared’. They have ‘laid the table’ down the ages by their following of Christ in like suffering and sacrifice, by their life-giving service. It has been men of the following of Christ, so deafened by the clamour of the clericalism of the years that they have been unable to hear the call of Wisdom’s maidservants and have so often denied women any presiding role at the Church’s Eucharist. They may yet hear this call of the maidservants Lady Wisdom has dispatched, ‘proclaiming from the city’s heights: ‘Who is ignorant? Let him step this way’! They may well note too the ‘him’ of the translation.