

## **Donnybrook**

5 February 2022

### **Welcome**

It is my hope that all of us know at least some people we would call wise. To call someone wise is to say something quite wonderful about a friend or a relative. It means they see things in the round and are somehow not subject to partiality. Often, it is combined with compassion.

### **Topic**

In the tradition, wisdom is especially associated with king Solomon.

### **Steps**

In our first reading today, Solomon is apparently given a *carte blanche*: he can ask for anything he wishes. Unexpectedly and intriguingly, he asks for wisdom, a heart to understanding how to discern between good and evil. This is a kind of foundational virtue, a frame of mind, which brings many blessings in its train. It is like happiness: one of those things we have by not aiming at it for myself. In the biblical tradition, there was a parallel made between a king needing wisdom to run a country and the individual need wisdom to govern his or her own life.

This leads me to think in two directions. Firstly, if I were given the same *carte blanche*, if I could imagine being offered anything I wanted, what would I choose? What do I really, really want deep down? An interesting question that nobody can answer for you, except you alone. The spontaneous response could be very revealing.

The second direction lands on the word discernment. As we go forward on the Synodal Pathways, we will all need to grow in the practice of discernment. The overall purpose will be to ask what does God want of his church as we go forward? It will involve respectful listening – not listening with my engine running, ready to butt in. It will involve some kind of setting aside what I want, what my vision might be, as we listen together. It will also be an adventure, as surprise. In the words of tomorrow's Gospel, we are invited to put out into the deep.

### **Conclusion**

Synod prayer