

HOMILY FOR VESPERS – OPENING OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2017
EPHESIANS 1:17-23

Saint Benedict tells us that we grow in wisdom by listening with the ear of our heart. Such wisdom takes us deep within ourselves to reflect on many things: the word of God, the experiences of life, the topics we study, and the choices we make. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, tells us something quite similar to the spirit of Saint Benedict. St. Paul writes that the "eyes of the heart" are what give us the spirit of wisdom to see the riches of glory that are promised to us in Jesus Christ. "The ears of our heart" and "the eyes of the heart" become the path to wisdom. This spirit of wisdom helps us to see, to understand, to seek, and to live for the plan of God which is our eternal glory, the unfolding of God's will for each of us. To seek after wisdom for Saint Paul demands nothing less than the transformation of our heart by the renewal of our mind.

The renewal of our mind in the search for wisdom gives our study of theology a definite direction. We do not merely want to know "about Christ," we must want "to know Christ," and this means to experience his paschal mystery in our lives. If we want to study theology, philosophy, or liturgy primarily to impress others with our clever ideas, we have missed the purpose of wisdom. Wisdom is a humble search in the heart to hear the voice of God, to discern what it means, and to put it into practice. Humility before God's word is necessary to find the way to wisdom, and then obey its demands.

As we begin this new academic year, let us all – students and faculty – give ourselves to the search for wisdom, truth, and holiness. Both Saint Benedict and Saint Paul tell us that our listening, our study, our reflection, and our prayer must move from the mind, and pass through the heart. We bring together the mind and the heart, and when we do that, the Holy Spirit has a dwelling place within us to show us the way that theology, liturgy, and philosophy give shape to a true Christian anthropology, the new and full humanism of Christ. Then will our study, our research, our prayer, and our actions be in accord with the mind of God. Such wisdom will reveal to us the God we desire to know, to imitate, and to serve.

(Amen.)