

Thirty Second Sunday of Ordinary Time 2020

My beloved brothers and sisters, have you ever rushed to the store, or hardware store for something that you absolutely needed to finish a job, only to arrive too late. Or, have you ever waited too long to purchase something, only to find out that you waited too long and now it is gone?

Today's Gospel reading is the end of a series of apocalyptic readings from St. Matthew's Gospel, that remind us to be always prepared to greet the Lord, whether at the end of our lives or at the end of time, because: "We do not know the hour nor the day... (so), be watchful! Be alert!" The point of all of the readings for today is not fear; rather, the wisdom of readiness.

The reading from the book of Wisdom is from the end of the Book, the conclusion is that it is Wisdom that is the gateway to immortality. Not the Wisdom of this world; rather, it is the exhortation to seek Wisdom and to live the Wisdom of God, which will survive the Last Judgement.

St. Paul reminds us of the certainty of death. Each of us will die, the point is living our lives in such a way that we are always prepared for that moment. As baptized Christians, we are called, not to live our lives in fear of death, for we remember and believe that we have been destined and chosen for eternal life with God. For the Baptized Christian, we have already mystically died with Christ in the waters of Baptism; we are now called to live out that reality in our daily lives. Do not give into materialism, focusing only upon this world and its things and pleasures, for our very eyes tell us that all these things are passing away; rather, focus on conforming your life to His, in which you have been joined by Baptism into His death and by Baptism into His Divine Life! Our hope is not in this world and its empty promises, but in Christ and His Divine Promises!

In the Greek of the Gospel, the Gospel story is a bit mystifying. These were not ten bridesmaids waiting for the Bride; rather, they are Παρθενοῖς, ten virgins, they were servant girls, sent by the Groom's father to form a welcoming party for the young groom, who seems to be delayed in his arrival. It is now very late and dark; and the groom and father of the groom are delayed because they were

negotiating the bridal price. The greater the price, the greater the delay, the greater the value of the bride. The ten virgins, have grown tired and all have fallen asleep, when a herald announces that the groom and his father have returned to the village. The five foolish virgins discover they are very low on oil, and of course, there is none to be had at that hour of the night- having failed in their duty, they pay the price of their foolishness, and are excluded from the house. However, the point of the story, is the possession of oil and being prepared to greet the groom when he returns.

Oil was one of the most precious of commodities. It provided food, medicine and light; in this case, **they are without light!** My beloved brothers and sisters, there are so many who have been baptized in Christ, and they have not kept their lamps full. Their lives are empty of light. When you hear the Lord's arrival, whether at the end of your lives or the end of time, it is way too late to dash out to the hardware store to buy more oil. Wisdom is to keep your lamps full, your wicks trimmed and your lives filled to the brim with oil. How will you do this: by constant prayer, especially the Rosary, by the Sacraments, by your good works and charity! That is the oil that we bring with us into eternity.