LIVING THE GOSPEL

32st Sunday in Ordinary Time
08th November, 2026

Theme: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: Almighty and merciful God, graciously keep from us all adversity, so that, unhindered in mind and body alike, we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All Amen**.**

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:1-13

[1] Jesus told this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaid took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five sensible: the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones tool flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, "The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him," At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trim their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are out." But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves." They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said "open the door for us." But he replied, "I tell you solemnly, I do not know you." Stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.'

Gospel Focus

As the liturgical year draws to a close, we continue with the last parables in Matthew's Gospel, today hearing the parable of the ten virgins. At this time, we are also invited to think about our own final encounter with the risen Christ, whether at our death or at the Second Coming and the Last Judgment. The parable reminds us of our own personal responsibility in following Christ: either we are prepared or not. As the parable illustrates well, we will not be able to "borrow" holiness from someone else. Jesus' final words of warning tell us that we will not know when we will meet God, and so we must always be vigilant.

Even as we keep in mind the infinite mercy of God, we also know that God has given us the free will to reject his offer. If we live well, lamps trimmed, we have no reason to fear a God who loves us and wants to be with us.

Gospel Reflection

It's good to be prepared. But there is something disturbing as today's parable plays out. The women who come prepared for the long vigil won't share their oil with their needy sisters. Instead, they send them off on a foolhardy mission at midnight to go buy their own. How can such seemingly selfish hoarding be laudable?

Many biblical commentators would explain that parables are meant to make only one point, and selfishness verses sharing is not the point of this one. It is a parable about the end time, which speaks about how each person needs to be accountable for his or her own good deeds or lack of them. Just as in the Sermon of the Mount, where Jesus says, "(Y)our light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (Matt 5:16), so in today's gospel, the oil that fuels the light is understood as good deeds, and no one can share theirs with someone who has none.

Nonetheless, there is still a disturbing dynamic set up by the parable. It constructs a dichotomous world in which some are wise and some are foolish, some are completely prepared and some are not at all; some are welcome into the feast and some are locked out. Matthew has a penchant for binary oppositions like this: weeds and wheat, sheep and goats, house built on rock and one built on sand, the wise and the foolish. But real life seems always somewhere in between: each of us a little foolish in our growth towards wisdom, all of us somewhat prepared, but never completely.

When placed in the contest of the whole gospel, instead of inducing fear, the parable instead gives assurance that when we are responding all along to the lifelong courtship by the Bridegroom, we will be ready for the moment of consummation. We prepare for the critical moment of meeting the Beloved face-to-face with all our daily choices for living justly. Every time we resist hoarding oil for ourselves, not stockpiling so that others are left wanting, we allow Christ's light to fill us and spread to others.

It is Isaac of Nineveh, a seventh century Nestorian bishop, describes: "there is a love, like a small lamp, fed by oil, that goes out when the oil is ended; or like a rain-fed stream which goes dry when rain no longer feeds it. But there is love, like a spring gushing from the earth, never to be exhausted" (*Early Fathers from the Philokalia*). Wise ones become one with inexhaustible river of Christ's love, their oil is continuously replenished as it is consumed.

Being wise also means knowing that, as the first reading describes, it is not our efforts alone that make for the light: Wisdom herself, who is unfading resplendence, seeks us out. Moreover, a closed door is never the final act. Just as God's power burst through the stone door of the tomb, Holy Wisdom can daily open the door of our hearts, transforming our lack of oil into an inexhaustible river of light and love.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Wisdom 6:12-16

12 Wisdom is bright and does not grow dim. By those who love her she is readily seen,
and found by those who look for her. 13 Quick to anticipate those who desire her, she
makes herself known to them. 14 Watch for her early and you will have no trouble; you
will find her sitting at your gates. 15 Even to think about her is understanding fully
grown; be on the alert for her and anxiety will quickly leave you. 16 She herself walks

about looking for those who are worthy of her and graciously shows herself to them as they go, in every thought of theirs coming to meet them.

Responsorial Psalm — Psalms 62(63):2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

R: ***For you my soul is thirsting, O God, my God.*** (***R***)

O God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water (***R***)

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory.
For your love is better than life, my lips will speak your praise. (***R***)

So I will bless you all my life, in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet, my mouth shall praise you with joy. (***R***)

On my bed I remember you. On you I muse through the night for you have been my help; in the shadow of your wings I rejoice. (***R***)

Second Reading — 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 We want you to be certain, brothers about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who have left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them; to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

672. Before his Ascension Christ affirmed that the hour had not yet come for the glorious establishment of the messianic kingdom awaited by Israel(Cf. *Acts* 1:6-7) which, according to the prophets, was to bring all men the definitive order of justice, love and peace.(Cf. *Isa* 11:1-9) According to the Lord, the present time is the time of the Spirit and of witness, but also a time still marked by "distress" and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church(Cf. *Acts* 1:8; *1 Cor* 7:26; *Eph* 5:16; *1 Pet* 4:17) and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching.(Cf. *Mt* 25:1, 13; *Mk* 13:33-37; *1 Jn* 2:18; 4:3; *1 Tim* 4:1)

796. The unity of Christ and the Church, head and members of one Body, also implies the distinction of the two within a personal relationship. This aspect is often expressed by the image of bridegroom and bride. The theme of Christ as Bridegroom of the Church was prepared for by the prophets and announced by John the Baptist.(*Jn* 3:29) The Lord referred to himself as the "bridegroom."(*Mk* 2:19) The Apostle speaks of the whole Church and of each of the faithful, members of his Body, as a bride "betrothed" to Christ the Lord so as to become but one spirit with him.(Cf. *Mt* 22:1-14; 25:1-13; *1 Cor* 6:15-17; *2 Cor* 11:2) The Church is the spotless bride of the spotless Lamb.(Cf. *Rev* 22:17; *Eph* 1:4; 5:27) "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her."(*Eph* 5:25-26) He has joined her with himself in an everlasting covenant and never stops caring for her as for his own body(Cf. *Eph* 5:29)

> This is the whole Christ, head and body, one formed from many . . . whether the head or members speak, it is Christ who speaks. He speaks in his role as the head (*ex persona capitis*) and in his role as body (*ex persona corporis*). What does this mean? "The two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the Church."(*Eph* 5:31-32) And the Lord himself says in the Gospel: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh."(*Mt* 19:6) They are, in fact, two different persons, yet they are one in the conjugal union, . . . *as head, he calls himself the bridegroom, as body, he calls himself "bride."*(St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 74:4:PL 36,948-949)

1036. The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a call to the responsibility incumbent upon man to make use of his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. They are at the same time an urgent call to conversion: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."(*Mt* 7:13-14)

> Since we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the single course of our earthly life is completed, we may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed, and not, like the wicked and slothful servants, be ordered to depart into the eternal fire, into the outer darkness where "men will weep and gnash their teeth."(*LG* 48 § 3; *Mt* 22:13; cf. *Heb* 9:27; *Mt* 25:13,26,30,31-46)

1618. Christ is the center of all Christian life. The bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social.(Cf. Lk 14:26; Mk 10:28-31) From the very beginning of the Church there have been men and women who have renounced the great good of marriage to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to be intent on the things of the Lord, to seek to please him, and to go out to meet the Bridegroom who is coming.(Cf. Rev 14:4; 1 Cor 7:32; Mt 2:56) Christ himself has invited certain persons to follow him in this way of life, of which he remains the model:

> "For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."(Mt 19:12)

Sharing and Discussion

1. All ten women fall asleep in the story—even the wise ones. What do you make of that? Does it comfort you, challenge you, or both?
2. Thinking about readiness and faith, how has your faith shifted from something you inherited or practiced out of habit into something personal—something you actively choose and nurture?

3. The door is shut at the end, which is a hard image. Yet the story is told to wake us up while there is still time. What first helped you tend or rekindle your faith?

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Loving God, give us the courage and capacity to wait for your coming with open hearts and open minds. Hear those prayers we raise and answer them according to your will. We ask this through that same Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Facilitator: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our "Living the Gospel" Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God's Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.

Every Saturday

Time: 9.30 – 11.00 am

Venue: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information, please contact;

Mary Chua - 96965049 (marybay2468@gmail.com)
George Chee – 97399216 (georgejc@gmail.com)

Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

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