



32nd Sunday Ord. Time Yr A

Lectio Divina

Lectio: In this text, Jesus is nearing the end of his teachings and soon there will be the Last Supper leading into his Passion, Death and Resurrection. He expresses his dismay at the resistance to belief in him in the 'Seven Woes for the Pharisees' (Mt 23:13-36) and a 'Lament for Jerusalem' (Mt 23:37-39). Jesus then leaves the Temple and focuses on speaking with his disciples¹. The disciples remarked about the beauty of the Temple as they left it with Jesus. This gave Jesus the opportunity to predict the destruction of the Temple. This would have troubled the disciples and was as much as subversive for the religious authorities. The disciples' and the Authorities' lives were integrally entwined with the Temple. For them, without the Temple, their whole world would fall apart. So their concerns would be: when will this destruction happen and will it be the end of the world? In Ch. 24 Jesus talks to both these questions. He predicts a time of great trial but warns against false prophets who might declare when these trials and the end of the world might occur. He warns (Mt 24:12-13): "*And because of such great wickedness, love will grow cold in many people. But the one who holds out to the end will be saved*". So, our text, The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids, throws light on what is to happen with the loss of the Temple. With Jesus, the Temple will be replaced by the Kingdom of God imaged as a wedding between the Lord Jesus and humanity. Will they be ready?² Are we ready?

Read: **Matthew 25: 1 - 13**

Meditatio: What belief or practice is fundamental to my faith? How important is the Church to me? What do activities in my Parish church mean for me? Is the image of the Church as the bride of Christ meaningful for me? How am I coping with the doors of churches being locked? How much is St Patrick's cathedral a focus in my life? In what ways do I look to Pope Francis and the Vatican? How am I keeping my faith alive through the Pandemic? Do I consider myself as wise/sensible? Have I been caught in compromising situations and felt foolish? Do I plan ahead and/or have backup plans? Do I lose enthusiasm for issues over time?³ Has my endurance been tested? Do I keep going even when my objective is a long way off? How do I cope when there is a delay and I have to wait on others? Have I 'fallen asleep' on the job? Am I ready to respond to the Lord when he comes e.g. in a person in need and/or when an issue needs attention? Am I ready for when the Lord will call me home? When challenged do I turn to others for help? Do I rely on other people's help? Am I ready to face unexpected trials? How am I facing the trials of the Pandemic? Does my faith, hope and love have their limits? How do I deepen my faith, hope and love? Is my practice of my faith just a routine or deepening of my faithfulness and improving of my perseverance? Is my relationship with Jesus alive and active? Am I 'thirsting' to know and remain close to Jesus?⁴

Oratio: Pray that we will remain faithful to Jesus no matter what happens. Pray that our practice of our faith may not become just routine. Pray that celebrations in our churches will continuously deepen our faith. Pray for perseverance through every trial. Pray that our faith may be deep-seated. Pray for wisdom in the choices we make. May the Holy Spirit be the source of our wisdom. Pray that we will not do just enough but be generous in our dealings. Pray that our churches may be places of prayer and worship of God. Pray that people will have enough so they can be generous in helping others. Pray for those who rely on handouts. Pray that help given to those in need may be a hand up for them. Pray for wisdom for governments and organizations when helping those in need. Pray for the StVdeP conference.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer — Find ways to continually deepen your faith.

✍ Fr Joe

Matthew 25: 1 - 13

Jesus told this parable to his disciples¹: ‘The kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones did take their lamps but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took 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 trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, ‘Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going 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 the 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.’

So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.’

Notes:

¹ This is where Jesus starts speaking just with his disciples and why our Reading begins with Jesus speaking to his disciples though he has been speaking with them at some length (one chapter) before the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids which is our text.

² Jesus is completing his teachings in our text. He refers us back to his first teachings in the Beatitudes, Mt 5:1-12. Each Beatitude is a state of **readiness** for the coming of the Kingdom of God – see Lec Div for 4th Sun Ord Time A, or Aus. Day or All Saints.

³ Consider the first line of the first Reading for this Sunday: ‘*Wisdom is bright, and does not grow dim.*’ (Wis 6: 12-16).

⁴ Consider this Sunday’s Psalm, Ps 62. Response: ‘*My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.*’