

## **HOMILY for 32<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year A**

Every time I hear this Sunday's Gospel, I often wonder why someone would bring a lamp without any oil in it. If we do that, we would be missing a few marbles in our heads. For that lamp would not light up; it would be useless to us. Another thing that makes me wonder about this story is that everyone gets drowsy & falls asleep before the groom's arrival. Suddenly, he comes at midnight & invites the virgins to come celebrate their wedding with him. I don't know if anyone would hold a wedding celebration at midnight. Usually that is the time that a wedding reception would end; & the whole wedding party would go home. The fact that the wedding is held at midnight & the groom delays his arrival makes the virgins & all the wedding guests tired & fall asleep. So, evidently this wedding story has been used to describe the delay of the second coming of Christ. Because of that, the ten virgins who have been waiting for Him fell asleep & lost their focus on that important moment. Five of them who were prepared for it would welcome Him without any problem & quickly come to the wedding celebration. Unfortunately, the other five were caught unprepared & not allowed to be a part of that special celebration. We certainly do not want to be caught unprepared like those foolish virgins who brought their lamps without oil.

The wedding story in this Sunday's Gospel is a wonderful description of how the second coming of Christ would be like. We Christians might not have heard that story a lot these days, but the early Church reflected on it often. For they thought that Jesus would return right away to take them all to Heaven with Him. In fact, when Y2K (the year 2000) was approaching, some Christian churches thought that Jesus would come back; & they were all prepared for the end of the world. Evidently the second coming of Christ is pending; but we do not know the exact day or the hour. That is why most people have forgotten about that important event & moved on with their regular life as if they are "drowsy & falling asleep." But, today's Wedding story reminds us to be prepared for the second coming of Christ & look forward to that exciting day. For that is what we Christians have made sacrifices & waited for. That day will vindicate all the troubles & crosses that we Christians have had to endure in this life. Our Lord will reward us & all His faithful ones with a bountiful banquet & an honorable place in His Kingdom. So, if we want to get that reward, the author of the Wedding story warns us, "Stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Besides keeping vigil for that day, we have been reminded to keep our lamps filled up with oil at all times. That way they would be burning bright when we meet Christ on that day. We would not run out of oil when we need it the most. I'm not sure if you have paid attention to the exchanges between the wise virgins & the foolish ones in this Sunday's Gospel or not. Here is what the foolish virgins said to the wise ones, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." It continues, "But, the wise virgins replied, 'No, for there may not be enough for us & you. Go instead to the merchants & buy some for yourselves.' While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came & those who were ready went into the Wedding feast with him." As Christians, we are called to help out one another especially in times of need. That is why it seems a bit strange for me to see that the wise virgins did not want to share some of their oil with foolish ones in desperate time like that. The reason for that is because everything we have done in this life – good or bad – sticks with us & stays in our personal records to the end. That is oil that keeps our lamps burning bright or not. We cannot exchange it with others or sell it like a

commodity on Amazon or Ebay. If we wait until the end to store up that oil or change our lifestyle, it might be too late. We might be left standing outside of the Gate of Heaven like those foolish virgins.

Reflecting on this Sunday's Gospel story, we're asked to be like the five wise virgins & learn to be prepared for the second coming of Christ by following His Commandments & doing more good deeds. Furthermore, we're encouraged to seek the virtue of wisdom & make it an essential part of our lives. For it will help us make the right decisions/choices & guide us through our tough journey here on earth. It will bring us lots of blessings & not disappoint us. Today's First Reading tells us more about this special virtue as following, "Resplendent & unfading is wisdom; & she is readily perceived by those who love her, & found by those who seek her. She hastens to make herself known in anticipation of their desire; whoever watches for her at dawn shall not be disappointed, for he shall find her sitting by his gate. For taking thought of wisdom is the perfection of prudence, & whoever for her sake keeps vigil shall quickly be free from care." So, if we appreciate this virtue, it will meet us & come to stay with us. It will help us be prudent in our words & actions & free us from all the worries of this life. We will not be disappointed with it.

My dear brothers & sisters, we do not want to be caught off guard at the second coming of Christ without any oil in our lamps like those foolish virgins in this Sunday's Gospel. Otherwise, it will be too late for us to change our lifestyle; & we will be left standing outside of the Gate of Heaven. So, wisdom counsels us to be prepared well for that important day & learn to do more good deeds in this life to keep our lamps burning bright. If we can do that, we will be ready to welcome Christ any time of the night & receive an honorable place at His Wedding banquet.