



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Father Chris Comerford
November 12, 2017 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I Wisdom 6:12-16

Psalm 63:2-8

Reading II 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Gospel Matthew 25:1-13

Homily

I decided to talk to the children about technology and how they need to be prepared and charge their cell phones or games because that is something they understand. So that is something we need to think about. We hear Jesus using the example again of a wedding. We have heard a lot of wedding parables, haven't we? The image is important to the Kingdom. And today in the readings we see more of the Jewish wedding traditions. The wedding and reception would start when the groom got there and there would be this procession of women carrying lamps for him, everyone would go in and the door would be locked. So you had to be ready.

The women knew they did not know the exact hour when the bridegroom would appear, so some of them brought extra oil. The others did not. Then later on the women who had not brought extra oil said, "Give us some of yours." And the other women answered, "No. Then we won't have enough." Those who did not have enough oil had to go out and find merchants to sell them oil. This was during a time when there was not a 24-hour Walgreen's where you go buy something any hour of the day. So they went out looking for extra oil and they missed out. They were locked out and the bridegroom said, "I do not know who you are."

What is this Gospel reading pointing to? Well, we know. It is clearly pointing to the time when Jesus will come again. This is a good message to reflect on today because it seems like it is taking forever for Jesus to return. This would have been especially true for the First Century Jews who were following Jesus and they would have thought — this is taking forever. They thought Jesus was going to come back quickly. So they were getting discouraged. St. Paul addressed that issue in the second reading because Jesus's followers were worried that if they died before Jesus came back — they were going to miss out. What happens? Paul reassures them in a beautiful reading from Thessalonians. Paul said, "Those who die will be raised up first. Then all of us who are still alive will be called next and everyone will have that opportunity." Those were consoling words to the early followers.

But what about us? It has now been over 2,000 years. However, the message is still real because we do not know the day or the hour when Jesus will come again. And it is hard to be prepared. If you knew that today was the day you were going to die and meet the

Lord — are you ready? That is kind of scary to think about. Many would say, “Sure, I am ready. But honestly there are a few things I need to get in order before it happens.” We need to be prepared. We do not want to be caught off guard. I will be honest with you, if we knew this was going to be our last day would we think: I have to clean my house, I have to get my bills paid — but those things are not really going to matter, are they? What we need to focus on is our relationship with others, and what we need to do to get that relationship in order. What is being prepared? What does it mean to have our extra oil with us? Our extra oil is prayer, the sacraments, and seeking reconciliation. We need healing with our relationship with God, and the church, and with others.

One of the things that is sometimes lost in this day and age is the sacrament of reconciliation, also called confession. We treat it almost like the last rites — something we don’t want to do unless we are really, really in bad shape. That is not the way it is intended. Reconciliation is a healing for us. Hopefully, I can encourage you to consider reconciliation more often. I just went to confession recently. I had not been for a while. For me it had been a couple of months. I try and go as often as I can because I realize that I need that. I need God’s mercy. I need God’s grace.

In our day and age we come to accept that it is OK to go to confession once a year. Or, if you miss a year you might think, “No big deal. I’ll go next year.” You put this off. You have the opportunity every Saturday and I hope to offer more opportunities for reconciliation. I will be honest — I have not been too busy in the confessional since I have been here. It has been kind of lonely in a way, and it makes we reflect that I need to encourage the good that comes from reconciliation, and the grace and strength we receive when we are healed. We need that in a greater way in our lives. We need to spend time doing things and thinking about others, rather than spending so much time thinking about ourselves. Maybe spending more extended time with God and sitting in silence is a good way to do this.

This is often difficult to do when you have a young family. But you need to do the best you can. A great way to get back on track is to go on an annual retreat or be part of a movement like Cursillo to give that time to God. This week coming up I will be making my annual retreat and I am looking forward to it. I need it right now and I am desiring it because it is a great way to spend more time focusing on the God who I say I love, and to realize what he is calling me to do. It gets things back in perspective. It is a good thing to do when we open our hearts to God.

There are many ways we can do this. But we do not want to be left out, caught asleep. Stay awake as Jesus challenges us. We do not know the day or the hour. I hope we can live in the right way and not be afraid, and realize what is really important. That is wisdom. Let’s pray for the strength to be able to do that. If there are things that are not in order, let’s pray to get them back in order. Let’s pray for God to give us the strength to live and to follow him, and always be prepared for that day when we meet him.

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