

**November 08, 2020**  
**32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Wisdom 6:12-16**  
**Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8**  
**1 Thes 4:13-18 or 4:13-14**  
**Mt 25:1-13**

## **CHECK YOUR OIL!**

### **Do we have enough 'oil' within us?**

In today's gospel proclaimed we heard the **Parable of the Ten Maidens**. According to St. Matthew, five of the maidens were wise and the other five were foolish. The foolish ones run out of oil and ask the wise ones to share their oil. However, there was no sharing that had happened. Listen again to what the wise ones said, "**No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.**" It sounded that the wise ones were selfish. They did not know how to share. But mind you, they were not called 'wise' for nothing. They were wise because they were aware that sharing it will bring more problems than solutions. If the wise ones shared it, the possibility of all the lamps going out was higher and it will be a disrespect to the bridegroom coming into the wedding feast in total darkness. The lighted lamps, full of oil, was a manifestation of the readiness of the wise ones in welcoming the bridegroom.

Many scripture scholars have studied and reflected on this parable. They are one in saying that the **bridegroom** symbolizes **Christ Jesus**; the **ten maidens** represent **the believers, the Church**; and the **oil** signifies **the faith, the character, and the personal relationship of the believers to God**.

If the **'oil'** signifies the **faith, character, and personal relationship** of the believers to God, the words of the wise ones to the foolish ones is a proclamation of a certain truth in Christian life. **What is that truth?** The truth is that there are certain elements in our Christian life we cannot borrow. We cannot borrow the stronger faith of others. We cannot borrow the Christian character or attitude of others. We cannot borrow the deepened personal relationship to God of others. We can be inspired by them, but we cannot acquire them without our willingness to do it. To put it simply – it is our **personal responsibility** if we want to nourish our faith, strengthen our Christian character, and deepen our personal relationship with God. Nobody will do that for us. It is only 'us' who will be accountable whether our 'oil' is sufficient or not.

Let me go back to my opening question: **Do we have enough 'oil' within us?** Let us change the word 'oil' into 'faith, Christian character, and personal relationship with God.' And so we ask: **Do we have enough 'faith' in God? Do we have enough 'Christian character' to practice in the world? Is our 'personal relationship with God' enough within us?**

We are in this pandemic for the past 8 months now. It seems there is no end in sight yet. The number of Covid-19 cases in the country and around the world is going up again. People are struggling. People are having a hard time. Some are becoming impatient with the

situation. Others have succumbed to distress and despair. If we don't have enough 'oil' within us, like the foolish maidens, this pandemic will surely put us in the dark. Without enough 'oil' waiting we could end up in despair.

As Catholic Christians, we use our eyes of faith in every situation. Therefore, we look at this pandemic as an opportunity to check our 'oil.' This is an opportune time for us to nourish our faith, improve our Christian character, and deepen our personal relationship with God. Taking this opportunity seriously will help us prepare ourselves well for the arrival of Christ Jesus, our Bridegroom.

Let me end up my homily by sharing with you a story.

A tour group was riding in an elevator to the top of the Empire State Building. At about the 102<sup>nd</sup> floor, a woman asked the tour guide, **"If the cables on this elevator break, do we go up or down?"** The tour guide answered, **"Well, that depends on how you are living."**

In this Mass, let us ask the Lord Jesus, our Bridegroom, to help us to be always ready for his coming like the wise maidens. May our 'oil' called 'faith, Christian character, and personal relationship with God' shine the most during this time of difficulty.

God bless us all!