ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let my prayer come into your presence.
Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

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,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING — Wis 6:12-16

A reading from the book of Wisdom

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.
Quick to anticipate those who desire her, she makes herself known to them.
Watch for her early and you will have no trouble;
you will find her sitting at your gates.
Even to think about her is understanding fully grown;
be on the alert for her and anxiety will quickly leave you.
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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM — Ps 62:2-8

Response:
For you my soul is thirsting, O God, my God.

1. 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.)**

2. 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.)**

3. 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.)**

4. 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 Th 4:13-18

(shorter form (1 Th 4:13-14) read between >> <<)

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

>> We want you to be quite 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 are 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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Stay awake and stand ready,
because you do not know the hour
when the Son of Man is coming.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL — Mt 25:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus told this parable to his disciples:
'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.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look with favour, we pray, O Lord,
upon the sacrificial gifts offered here,
that, celebrating in mystery the Passion of your Son,
we may honour it with loving devotion.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose,
near restful waters he leads me.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by this sacred gift, O Lord,
we give you thanks and beseech your mercy,
that, by the pouring forth of your Spirit,
the grace of integrity may endure
in those your heavenly power has entered.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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Concordat cum originali: + Eamon Martin Archbishop of Armagh. Commentary by Fr. Gerard Moloney CSsR. The English translation of the entrance and communion antiphons, the opening prayers, prayers over the gifts, gloria, creed, and prayers after communion from The Roman Missal, © 2010 International Commission of English in the Liturgy Corporation. Jerusalem Bible version of the scriptures copyright: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., and Doubleday & Co. Inc. Responsorial psalms are copyright The Grail and/or Geoffrey Chapman Ltd. Published in Ireland by Redemptorist Communications (www.redcoms.org); Published in the UK by Redemptorist Publications (www.rpbooks.co.uk)

Redemptorist Communications

Sunday Message
THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



AT THE READY

MT. 25:1-13

I sometimes wonder about the difference between the five wise bridesmaids and the five foolish ones in today's Gospel. Why did the wise ones bring the extra oil? How come they were so prepared?

Amid the many preparations for the wedding, the getting ready, the mounting excitement and anticipation as the ceremony drew near, what possessed them to bring flasks of oil along with their lamps? It seems like an unusually careful thing to do.

Perhaps the difference between them and the other bridesmaids was that they had personal knowledge of the bridegroom. Maybe they knew that the bridegroom had a reputation for being late, that he was never on time for anything, they he was the type who would be late even to his own wedding. And so they thought it prudent to take precautions.

Maybe the other bridesmaids didn't know the groom all that well and so wouldn't have factored in the possibility that he might be late. Believing that everything would go according to plan, it wouldn't have entered their heads to go to the trouble of bringing extra oil. Why should they? By the time they realised their mistake, it was too late. When the ceremony eventually got under way, they weren't allowed to participate in the celebration. They were left outside the door. It seemed an extraordinarily harsh punishment.

Of course, a parable is a story told to make a point, and Jesus wanted to make his point absolutely clear.

The ten bridesmaids represent us - the Christian community - waiting for the Messiah's return. Some are wise and some are foolish; some are prepared for his coming and some are not, some have their lamps lit, others have not. Like the wise bridesmaids, we must be always prepared, alert, ready for when the bridegroom will come. We must always have our lamps lit, for we do not know the day or the hour. ■

PRAY

Today's first reading speaks of the importance of wisdom. Pray for the gift of wisdom, so that you will know what is truly important and what is not.

DO

Make an examination of conscience. Are you living in such a way that you are ready to meet the Lord whenever he calls you?

LEARN

The Christian must be ready for the Messiah when he comes in judgement at the end of time. If he does not find us ready, all he can say to us is "I do not know you." Like the wise bridesmaids, we must be faithful to our baptismal calling, people who trust in God at all times and live by the Christian values of justice, peace and love.

REFLECT

In today's second reading, St Paul offers wonderful words of assurance and consolation to the Christian community in Thessalonica. He tells them they need not grieve for those who have died because God will bring with him all who have died in Jesus. That is the hope and the promise of their faith.

It is the hope and the promise of our faith.

The gift of faith changes everything. In early 2022 Richard Gaillardetz was discussing with his wife what to do when he retired in a few years from his position as professor of systematic theology at Boston University. He had been dean of theology there as well as a former president of the Theological Association of America. He was a leading expert on Vatican II and had written and lectured widely on the Council and its impact.

Richard was planning for his retirement and then all changed utterly. On 22 February 2022, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given a maximum of 18 months to live. On that easy to remember date - 22/2/22 - all his plans, he said - for retirement, the books he was going to write, the places his wife Diana and he were going to visit - went out the window. He had to manage instead for his treatment and his death. Richard began to blog about his illness. This blog was published as a book following his death on 7 November 2023.

In 'While I breathe, I hope,' he writes beautifully about the consolation his faith gave him as he approached his end, the precious gift that faith is. Richard believed wholeheartedly in the Gospel, and that belief sustained him to his dying breath.

As St Paul writes, our faith is a precious gift we should always treasure, always appreciate, always nurture, never take for granted.

The gift of faith changes everything. ■

SAY

"Lord, help me to be ever prepared for your coming. Deepen my faith in you. Amen."