**Thirty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time A - Be prepared!**
November 8, 2026

Our journey in life is always about preparedness. We go to prenatal classes to prepare for the arrival of our newborn. We go to school to get educated to prepare for our career. We go to pre-marriage course to learn how to live our lives as married couples. We invest our hard-earned money to prepare for retirement. We even purchase our burial plot ahead of time to prepare for our final resting place. Are we prepared for our eternal life with God?

This Sunday's gospel (Matthew 25: 1-13) is not so much about the comparison of the wise bridesmaids against the foolish ones. According to Pope Francis, it is more about the Lamp of Faith and Oil of Charity. Pope Francis explained that the ten virgins represent the Kingdom of Heaven. The lamps symbolize faith, which is a gift we receive, while the oil symbolizes charity (love) and good works, which allow faith to remain alive and fruitful. Pope Francis emphasized that being awake or watchful does not merely mean keeping one's eyes open, but being ready. Being prepared for the Lord's return requires living a life of love, kindness, and concrete service rather than waiting until the last minute. The Pope noted that the essential things of life—like love, grace, and preparation to meet God—cannot be borrowed from others at the final hour; they must be cultivated day by day. It is more about how we view the invitation extended to us all to take our place in the kingdom of God. The point of the parable is not so much about weddings as it is about readiness. Life here on earth comes to an end much sooner than any of us expect. We have to make the best use of the time we have been given. We cannot be putting off to a more convenient time our opportunities to serve God. Life is short. We should not procrastinate and say "one of these days I'll make time for confession" or "when I have time I'll go to a Sunday mass" or "when I figure it out, I'll donate to charities" or "when I have holidays I'll go see my parents". Being ready beforehand is what matters most and a last minute hurry to get ourselves into spiritual shape is not to be recommended. If we are to have an eternity of joy we shall have to prepare for it whole-heartedly. Admittance to the banquet of eternal life cannot be taken for granted. Christ teaches the parable of the ten bridesmaids as a warning because the day of the Lord will come with startling suddenness like a thief in the night.

There are two things in life that are unavoidable: tax and death. While we may be able to postpone paying our tax with a good reason, there's no running away from death. So, while we still have time, we should make use of every opportunity to build up our relationship with God, telling God our plans, worries and thoughts. We should ask Christ to guide us every step of the way. Christ is always prepared to meet us, so we, on our part, must be prepared to meet him. Christ is always knocking on our door, we must be ready to open our door to let him in, asking him to guide and lead us to love God and our neighbour. We are not to take the chance of going through life relying on the minimum of holiness. When the call comes, what will count are the qualities of character we have developed, not the riches we possess or the fortune we have gathered. Staying awake must be the axis around which our whole being and life rotate.

When we do that which we know within our hearts is the right Christian way of acting, we are not just doing a good deed. We are serving God. His Presence in our lives transforms our actions to such an extent that the effects of our actions have infinite value. The results of these actions continue forever. No opportunity we have to serve God is too little to have a major effect upon our lives and the lives of his people. But opportunities pass, and sometimes, they never appear again. We have so little time left and so much to do before this present phase of our lives comes to an end, before the Master comes to take us into his banquet. Today we
ask God to help us refine our lives so we may make the best use of the time he gives us to bring His Presence to the world.

The parable is a crystal clear warning to live lives of watchfulness and prudent preparedness. Such virtues develop in us when we are attentive to the world of God and carry it out in practice. We cannot be sleeping on the job. When I was in scouting with our son, we had to say our motto at every meeting: “Be prepared!” With the parable of the ten bridesmaids, Jesus is reminding us of this motto, “Be prepared” to enter the kingdom of God.