



**Encountering Christ**  
Prayerfully preparing for the  
Sunday Mass and praying in  
particular for our school families



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023 - The Thirty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

## 1 Relax & Remember

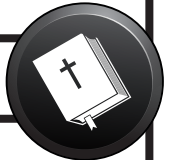
Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



## 2 Read

**Taken from the Gospel for Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023 - The Ten Wedding-Attendants (Matthew 25:1-13)**

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.'



## 3 Reflect

**After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.**

*Of course they weren't bridesmaids! According to the custom of the time the girls were attendant on the bridegroom, to greet him with their lamps as he arrived at the wedding-reception. Anyway, half of them weren't ready, let him down, and then found themselves shut out. There is a subtle difference between the parables given in Mark's and Matthew's gospels. In Mark they are all about the sudden coming of God's Kingship in history, at the time of Jesus. Jesus proclaimed that the crisis was now. In him God's reign had arrived: it was time to take drastic action. Matthew's parables take a longer-term view: there will be a final judgment at the end of time, for which we, in the Church and in the course of history, must prepare. Some will and some won't. Some will be found to be wheat, others to be weeds. When the catch of fish comes in, some fish will be thrown away, some kept. Some will be sheep and others goats. Each year, as the liturgical year draws to a close, the Church reminds us of this. And the End will be sudden and unpredictable, like a burglar on the one night I forgot to lock the door, or like a mouse-trap snapping shut, or like the unpredictable moment of birth pangs.*

**Am I ready for the coming of Christ? What does it mean to be like the wise bridesmaids and have oil in my lamp?**

**Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB**

## 4 Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church  
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**

# WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023



## First Reading: *The Search for Wisdom*

### Wisdom 6:12-16

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.

*For the Bible, Wisdom is not knowledge, such as scientific or philosophical knowledge acquired by study and learning, or even the sound judgment acquired by experience and maturity. It is the reflection of God's own Wisdom, the Wisdom by which God creates the world and guides humanity. Wisdom is therefore divine, a reflection or image of God, 'the reflection of the eternal light and the image of his power'. Everything created is good in so far as it expresses this Wisdom of God. In the New Testament Jesus is seen as the incarnation of God's own Wisdom as well as the incarnation of the 'Word' of God, for Jesus is both the first-born and the summit of God's creative purpose. In Greek 'Wisdom' is a feminine noun, and therefore divine Wisdom is often represented as a female character, a hostess inviting to her banquet all who desire true Wisdom. We need to seek out this Wisdom. It can be granted only by God, but God is eager to share divine Wisdom with those who truly search for 'her'. This reading is given here to pair with the gospel-reading because of the image it uses of keeping awake, watching early for the coming of Wisdom/the bridegroom.*

*Is my skill at cookery or car-maintenance the same as me or a part of me? Is God's Wisdom the same as God?*

## Second Reading: *The Last Trumpet*

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

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 forever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

*The first Christians were unclear about many things in their faith. The Thessalonians were obviously worried about the fate of Christians who had died. Had not Paul taught them that Christ had conquered death? What was this talk about an imminent final coming of Christ to bring history to its end? How soon would it occur? Paul gives an answer in terms of a familiar image, a Roman triumphal procession. After a great victory in battle a Roman general could be granted a 'triumph', marching through the streets of Rome with his victorious army amid cheering crowds, like a successful football team or local regiment coming home. There was no need to worry about Christian friends and relations who had died, for they would come with Christ in his triumphal procession, and the rest of us would join him on the way. All this, of course, is imagery. Neither Paul nor anyone else had any idea when it would occur. But he teaches with firm confidence that it would occur. The timing is irrelevant. We don't mind waiting a bit, so long as we can be sure that we will all be re-united in the joyful triumph of Christ's victory over death.*

*Do we need to know any more about the end of the world than this?*

“ We will all be re-united in the joyful triumph of Christ's victory over death. ”

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*  
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