

### 32 Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Wisdom 6:12-16; Psalms 63; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13**

I am grateful for our first reading in the book of Wisdom that reminds us of the value of wisdom. The personification of wisdom found in our passage and in other books of the Bible speak to the importance of wisdom as well. In addition, not only is wisdom something we seek, but even more, God's wisdom is a grace that seeks us. Bishop Barron says it this way, "The wisdom of God hastens to make herself known. Before we want wisdom, she wants us more."

According to Pope Francis, "Wisdom is: the grace of being able to see everything with the eyes of God. It is simply this: Seeing the world situations, conjunctures, problems, everything with God's eyes. This is wisdom. Often we see things as we want to see them or according to our heart, with love, with hate, with envy. No, this is not God's eyes. Wisdom is what the Holy Spirit does within us so that we can see everything with God's eyes. This is the gift of wisdom."

One of the challenges of finding wisdom is that often the wisdom of the world is contrary to the wisdom of God. Paul writes, "The foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom" (I Corinthians 1:25). God's wisdom is not of this world.

*"Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold" (Prov 3:13-14).*

I greatly enjoy living in a coastal town with the ocean and tides. Every time I drive down Egan Drive, along Gastineau Channel, it is clear to see if the tide is low or high. Gravity is amazing. NOAA states, "High tides and low tides are caused by the moon. The moon's gravitational pull generates something called the tidal force. The tidal force causes earth and its water to bulge (*or stretch*) out on the side closest to the moon and the side farthest from the Moon. Because the earth rotates through two tidal "bulges" every lunar day, coastal areas experience two high and two low tides every 24 hours and 50 minutes.

Did you get that? The gravitational pull of the moon on the earth actually “bulges” or “stretches” the earth. While the earth itself is stretched, the ocean is affected more than land and thus we visually see the stretch or “tidal force” with every high tide.

If earth is stretch by gravity. I know we, at times, are stretched by God. This week God has been stretching my understanding of the Parable of the 10 virgins who go to meet the bridegroom.

On the surface it appears that the primary message of the parable is the call of Jesus to “Stay Awake”. Jesus concluded the parable saying, “Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Matthew 25:13). We are called as God’s children to be ready for Jesus, the bride groom, to come back. We are asked to “Stay Awake”.

What does it mean to “Stay Awake”? In light of our Scripture lessons this morning, we can surmise that “Staying Awake” means: Seeking God’s Wisdom, (Wisdom chapter 6). Thirsting for God, (Psalm 63). Living in Hope (I Thessalonians 4). and Being Ready. These are all essential qualities of the life of faith. We are all called to be wise, thirsting, hopeful, and ready disciples of Jesus.

Yet, I wonder if there is more to the parable? Is there more to the story of the 10 virgins than 5 having enough oil and 5 not? I have been stretched this week ever since I heard the questions, “What if the 5 foolish virgin’s mistake wasn’t that they didn’t have enough oil, but that they left? What if their mistake wasn’t about oil, but was about not thinking they could stand in the darkness?”

These questions keep running through my mind and heart? There is more to the story. I find myself relating much more to the foolish than to the wise.

I would like to think that I am ready, that I have plenty of oil in my lamp as I wait for Jesus. Yet, why is it that I struggle to keep still? Why is it that I have a difficult time praying for any length of time? Why is it that I am compelled to think I need to bring more than myself to Jesus?

It makes me wonder. Are the virgins actions our mistakes too? Like the 5 virgins who left before the bridegroom returned, do we lose heart, give up and leave too early? Do we fear standing in the darkness? Do we let the

voices of others lead us away from the presence of Jesus? Do we feel we have to do more to earn God's love and acceptance?

If these are our mistakes, our actions, our foolishness too, what can we learn from them?

-Don't leave. Don't give up. Jesus is so close.

-Keep your eyes on Jesus' presence with you and for you.

-Wait in hope of Jesus' glorious return.

-Trust in the mercies of God.

-Lean on God's limitless love.

-Share your light with others.

-Be willing to stand in the darkness.

We are called to wait in hope that the light of Christ will come. I am reminded of Isaiah's prophecy we read every Advent, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, upon them light has shined" (Isaiah 9:2).

We have been and are living in a very challenging time. For many, our land has become a land of darkness. While the news of a new president has lifted some, it burdens others. And what of COVID, ongoing racial tensions, and our own personal hardships? Hear these hope filled words, "the light of Christ shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it" (John 1:5). With this hope and promise, I pray we will not leave, but instead stay awake, open to God being our light. Open to God's wisdom. Open to God being our hope, our peace, our comfort, our All in All.

As the gravitational pull of the moon stretches the earth and her waters to form our tides, may we sense the pull of God's wisdom and love stretching our hearts and minds all for the glory of God.

I will pray for you and ask that you pray for me.

God bless you in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Deacon Steve

