

Homily. 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.A. 7/8 November 2020.

There are some people who thrive on chaos and disorder. I make no judgements about this small cohort of people except to say to them; This is your hour to shine your light and I, for one, look forward to seeing the way you lead us into our increasingly uncertain future.

For everyone else though who is struggling with all of the confusion, change and uncertainty our times are daily dishing up, take a lesson from the 1st reading. Be on the lookout for the gift of wisdom allowing her to come deeper into your mind and heart for she is sitting at your gate, right under your nose, just waiting to be welcomed into you. This wonderful gift, God's Wise Spirit, is ready to allay our anxieties guiding us towards the best way to be ready to greet the Lord's arrival and all that is coming.

The Gospel parable of the 10 bridesmaids tells us that due to the groom's delayed arrival, God's timing not being ours, all of them fell asleep. The difference between the wise and foolish ones was that the 'wise five' as I like to call them were prepared for the unforeseen, having extra oil on hand for their lamps. This meant that they could awaken and welcome the groom's arrival whenever that turned out to be, lighting His way into the banquet hall where they would join Him in the great wedding feast. They had thought matter and many possibilities through for themselves, wisely focusing on what mattered while preparing for what they couldn't control.

The foolish bridesmaids were so, not only because of their lack of preparation for the unknown, but also because they expected the 'wise five' to up fix their problems risking all of them becoming light-less and

locked outside. Their foolishness was further shown in that they went off to see if they could buy oil for themselves in the middle of the night, a dangerous trip unlikely to succeed and only serving to further run down their remaining oil supply. For us to understand this we have to remember that there weren't 24 hour shops back in those days, let alone street lights, and that going shopping at midnight was risky to their personal safety and likely a further futile act for them to undertake.

What we discover from God's words today that helps those us who are living with some sadness and more than a little stress in these crazy times is that God's much needed wisdom is ever ready and waiting for us if only we will let Her into ourselves. We can do this by silencing our minds from anxious rumination and upsetting distractions, choosing instead to focus our hearts on the coming of the Lord who always wants to call us out of the darkness and into sharing the feast of His light.

Amidst all of the changed expectations and confusion so prevalent these days, being wise, prepared for and centred on the things that last and matter will give us the energy and oil to light up our lamps at the crucial time. Of one thing we have absolute certainty; that He will come. The only matter of contention is whether we've wisely prepared for the new age that is dawning, or without any wisdom and readiness, foolishly chosen to be left out in the darkness of our own design.