

ORDINARY TIME 32nd SUNDAY (Year A)

Homily by Fr. Maraiiah

This Sunday's readings bring the usual warnings about preparation for the end of our own world, the end of our own time and our passage to another world. They tell us that a searching, watching, and growing heart is essential for a lively, dynamic Faith in God. They challenge us to check whether we are ready for these events and how we are preparing for them.

Since Jesus' parable in today's Gospel has five well-prepared, wise women, the first reading chosen for today is one which personifies wisdom as a woman. The author advises Jews in Alexandria not to envy the wisdom of the pagan philosophers, because they themselves have true wisdom in their Sacred Scripture, a wisdom which regulates not only this life but the next also.

Hence, they must live their lives in strict conformity with the Divine wisdom given them so generously by God. In the second reading, Paul offers Christian wisdom, assuring those Christians who expected Jesus' second coming in their lifetime that the death and Resurrection of Jesus is powerful enough to save even those who die before Jesus' *second coming*. But they need to be alert, well-prepared and vigilant. In the Gospel parable of the ten virgins, the foolish virgins represent the "Chosen People of God" who were waiting for the Messiah but were shut out from the messianic banquet because they were unprepared. The parable teaches us that, like the five wise virgins, we should attend to duties of the present moment, preparing now, rather than waiting until it is too late. **Warnings given by the parable:** 1) The parable warns us that there are certain things which cannot be obtained at the last minute: a) a good relationship with God, b) good character, c) merits from good deeds of sharing and forgiving love and humble service done to others. 2) The parable also warns us of certain elements in Christian life that cannot be borrowed: a) relationship with God, b) ideal character, c) Faith.

Life messages: 1) We need to be wise enough to remain ever prepared: Wise Christians find Jesus in the most ordinary experiences of daily living — in the people they meet, the events that take place, and the situations in which they find themselves, and they carefully make their daily

choices for God. They are ready to put the commandment of love into practice by showing kindness, mercy and forgiveness. 2) Let us be sure that our Lamps are ready for the end of our lives: Spiritual readiness, preparation, and growth are the result of intentional habits built into one's life. We cannot depend on a Sunday Mass or morning service to provide all our spiritual needs. We cannot depend on Christian fellowship to provide us with spiritual development. The meeting of spiritual needs and spiritual development itself come through routine, mundane attention to ordinary spiritual disciplines — making sure we have enough oil or spiritual fuel: oil of compassion and mercy, oil of patience, sympathy, and forgiveness. We open ourselves to receive these graces by taking time for prayer, and being alone with God; by reading God's Word; by living a sacramental life; by offering acts of service to others; by moral faithfulness, by loving obedience, and by spending time with other Christians for mutual prayer, study and encouragement. When we receive the graces we need, we thank God for His generous love. As taking these ways becomes habitual, they cease to be a struggle and begin to be a source of strength and blessing. They make our lives powerful against the onslaught of the world.