

32nd Sunday of the Year A

**First Reading** 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.

**Second Reading** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

We want you to be quite certain, brothers and sisters, 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.

**Gospel** 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."

**Meditation**

The marriage customs at the time of Christ are somewhat unclear, but a typical ceremony seems to have progressed in the following way. The groom, having previously negotiated with the bride's father for a bride price, went with his friends to the bride's house. Then, in grand procession, bride and groom together with their friends went with singing and dancing to the groom's house. There a great feast of celebration was held. It would seem that today's gospel portrays a scene in which the groom has not yet arrived at the bride's house. The details of the wedding ceremony are neglected in favour of the basic message of the parable, the need to remain ready. The delay of the groom may lull the invited guests into carelessness, but there will be no allowance for the unprepared.

The Church waits at the bride's house for the return of the groom. The wait has been long.

For this reason we continue to exhort each other with the words of the gospel: "Keep your eyes open, for you know not the day or the hour."