

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – November 12, 2017 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Wisdom 6:12-16

Resplendent and unfading is wisdom, and she is readily perceived by those who love her, and found by those who seek her. She hastens to make herself known in anticipation of their desire; whoever watches for her at dawn shall not be disappointed, for he shall find her sitting by his gate. For taking thought of wisdom is the perfection of prudence, and whoever for her sake keeps vigil shall quickly be free from care; because she makes her own rounds, seeking those worthy of her, and graciously appears to them in the ways, and meets them with all solicitude.

Psalm: Ps 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

R. (2b) **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

R. **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
to see your power and your glory,
For your kindness is a greater good than life;
my lips shall glorify you.

R. **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

Thus will I bless you while I live;
lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be
satisfied,
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

R. **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

I will remember you upon my couch,
and through the night-watches I will meditate on you:
You are my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.

R. **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God**

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the

Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus told his disciples this parable: "The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise ones replied, 'No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.' While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.' Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour."



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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

How can it be that the “typical questions” of children pass down from generation to generation? Our family car was half way to Colorado and I was about six or seven and I clearly remember asking my mother that famous, time-honed question, “Mommy, are we there yet?” It was a real question, and I wasn’t quoting someone else. Or so I thought. By now I have heard child after child ask exactly the same question of a parent, in exactly the same words. Maybe it is an innate instinct, like geese flying south or robins jerking up worms. As we become mature, we human beings learn to wait, to live with the “not yet.” We call it “delayed gratification.” I may want to be at home, for instance, but to get there from work, I might have to walk to the bus stop, wait for the #10, surrender my fee, stand until there is a seat, sit down at long last, wait some more, get off, walk 50 blocks (it seems), unlock my door, and finally, finally, finally, finally, put up my feet and relax. Some days this can be annoying, but usually “I get used to it,” as we say.

But we shouldn’t get overly used to it. That is the point of this week’s readings. Since we are not children, we can overlook the joy or pleasure that comes when our goal finally arrives, because our minds have for so long looked away. These won’t get fulfilled very soon anyway. Do you ever remember to taste the food when you finally get your dinner at a restaurant? Did you remember to enjoy in quiet detail the friend you haven’t seen in a year? Or do you let a false delay squash longing and fulfillment? Sunday’s First Reading reminds us peacefully and beautifully to watch for God at dawn; to keep vigil because Wisdom (the Holy Spirit of God) is searching for those who are waiting. God’s wisdom “meets them with all solicitude.” The Responsorial Psalm boldly names our craving for God. The antiphon says, “My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.” And the Gospel adds, stay awake! Make preparations. Do not be foolish. Do not forget to be ready.

Let’s face it. You and I desire God more than anything else. At the center of our souls is a thirst that will never be satisfied unless the God of all creation comes in person to be living water for us. We live like parched ground without rain. We have huge fractures in our surface. Our souls ache for the gentle, courteous and tender outpouring God wants to provide—not like hurricanes or floods, but like a mother with her newborn. “Your kindness is a greater good than life,” the psalm says to God. What? Life is so essential, so to be preserved, so valuable, that we fight like cornered rats when it is threatened. Still, even so, in spite of all our flurry, God’s delicious kindness is a far greater good than anything else we know, greater even than being alive. It is worth the wait, no matter how long. So, we need to be excited like a child. We can say, “I want” like kids do. But also, we can be calm like an adult. We know that when our desires are thwarted we just need to wait for wisdom, which waits for us.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. In this reading people are looking for Wisdom at the same time that Wisdom is searching for them. What does “wanting wisdom” do for your “receiving wisdom”? Explain this line from the reading. “... whoever watches for her at dawn shall not be disappointed, for he shall find her sitting by his gate.”
2. Would you live differently if you thought “the end time” was right around the corner—as the Thessalonians seemed to? If so, what would you change?
3. Jesus’ parable is about being watchful and well prepared. Is the “stay awake” assignment just for people over a certain age, or people who have gotten bad news from their doctors? When you watch for God in your life do you sometimes “doze off”? What exactly were you waiting for?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

God of power and mercy, protect us from all harm. Give us freedom of spirit and health in mind and body to do your work on earth. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen