

St. Frances Cabrini - Lebanon, TN
Thirty-Second Sunday of Ordinary Time – Year A
November 12, 2017

Wisdom 6:12-16

Thessalonians 4:13-18

Mt 25:1-13

Today we hear of another wedding, bridegroom, and potential brides. What is it lately about wedding readings and marriages on my Sunday to preach? I can't seem to get away from them. It could be worse. We could be reading about funerals.

Before we look at our readings today, let's look at where we are in Matthew's gospel. For the past weeks, Jesus has been sharing parables with the Pharisees and Sadducees on the end times. They contain who will be invited and who will be left behind. We hear why some will be invited and why others won't. We are well into Holy Week at this point in the gospel. This is the second to last parable before Jesus' passion. He knows his earthly life is near an end.

In our first reading, Wisdom is part of an exhortation given to kings. The author, is sometimes presented as the voice of King Solomon. Royal persons were symbols in Greek culture of the ideal human person. By addressing his audience this way, the writer intends to inspire everyone to reach for the virtues of the ideal ruler. Not only those in palaces, but every human person has an exalted, kingly, dignity, and should seek wisdom. We are all priest, prophet and king.

We often hear of wisdom, in this book, and others, portrayed as a woman. So we will hear those seeking her must have persistence. It requires constancy and engagement of the whole person in the pursuit; setting one's heart on her, keeping vigil for her. She is sitting at the gate, but will be missed by those who are not attentive.

What does wisdom and the wedding parable have in common? Think of the wedding as the end times. The five virgins with oil flasks are wise. We must live as if the end times is imminent, that it will come. We must be ever ready for Christ' return. We must use lessons learned in the past for when living in the present. This is wisdom.

Also, wisdom is the light from God, like the lamps in the gospel. Think of it as a lighthouse. A lighthouse's purpose has remained the same since their inception: to show the way and to warn of danger. Its light is meant for all. Wisdom is like that lighthouse. It may shine on countless people in countless situations and circumstances, but it always shows the way and warns of danger.

To be ready for God requires us to have a relationship with God. Have you ever had a relationship with someone that you have never met or had conversation with? How did that work? Not very well. Our relationship with God is not one way. God cannot do it all. Well, he can, but chooses not to. He gave us free will. The relationship requires us reach out to God. Us...you, me. You can't do it for me. I cannot do it for you. This is the symbolism of the ten virgins. The wise virgins were not being selfish toward the unwise. They could not prepare for the unwise virgins.

So what does wisdom teach us? It is wisdom that cautions us to be vigilant, to be ready. It is wisdom that prepares us for the night watches of life. It is wisdom that assures us that while we may not know the exact time of the coming of the Lord, he will indeed come into every life, perhaps at the time we least expect. It is wisdom that instructs us to be ready, even while we sleep.

Learning to prepare for the end times can be used elsewhere. This is the beauty of the Church's liturgical calendar. We have different seasons to prepare for and celebrate. Advent is just around the corner. It is our time to prepare for the coming of the Christ child. Here is a chance to use wisdom. Let us be royal in our pursuit. Let us be diligent in our waiting for his coming. Let us be diligent in preparing our heart. Let us be diligent in loving others. Let us be diligent in serving others. These are the things that makes God's heaven here on earth.