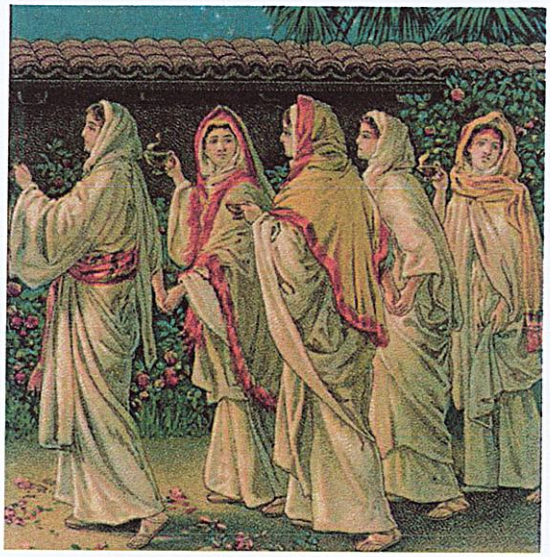
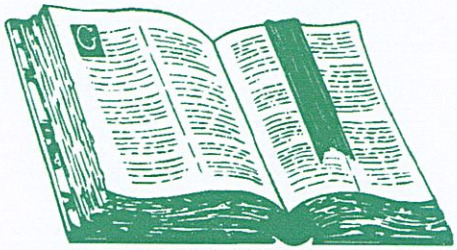
Our Faith on Sunday

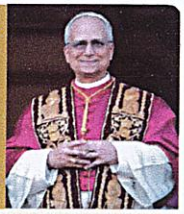
GOSPEL REFLECTION



In the gospel reading for this Sunday, we hear Jesus telling his listeners to "watch". What could this mean for our lives as Christians? Life is unpredictable. When we get up in the morning, we cannot foretell what situations we are going to encounter. Often, we find ourselves reacting on the spur of the moment. At times we regret how we reacted. We regret an angry outburst, an unkind word that was said, sharing malicious gossip about a work colleague, turning away from an opportunity to help someone in need. It is particularly to these situations that we can apply the word, "watch". When I get up in the morning I can pre-programme myself to make sure that my first reaction to any situation will be one of love. Some commentators on the parable of the bridegroom and the virgins say that the oil that the five foolish virgins lacked was love. I can begin my day with a simple question: "Do I have love in my heart?" When a car crash is about to happen, there is no time to fasten my seatbelt. The time to fasten my seatbelt was at the beginning of my journey. During the day we often find ourselves "crashing" into other people for one reason or another. Whose fault it is doesn't matter. What matters is that I have a safety belt around my heart to stop myself from saying or doing anything which will cause a rift in the relationship with the other; to prevent the "crash" from being "fatal". Only love can do that.



POPE LEO XIV
THE HOLY SEE
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATIONS



JESUS, THE POOR MESSIAH

19. The Gospel shows us that poverty marked every aspect of Jesus' life. From the moment he entered the world, Jesus knew the bitter experience of rejection. The Evangelist Luke tells how Joseph and Mary, who was about to give birth, arrived in Bethlehem, and then adds, poignantly, that "there was no place for them in the inn" (Lk 2:7). Jesus was born in humble surroundings and laid in a manger; then, to save him from being killed, they fled to Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-15). At the dawn of his public ministry, after announcing in the synagogue of Nazareth that the year of grace which would bring joy to the poor was fulfilled in him, he was driven out of town (cf. Lk 4:14-30). He died as an outcast, led out of Jerusalem to be crucified (cf. Mk 15:22). Indeed, that is how Jesus' poverty is best described: he experienced the same exclusion that is the lot of the poor, the outcast of society. Jesus is a manifestation of this privilegium pauperum. He presented himself to the world not only as a poor Messiah, but also as the Messiah of and for the poor.

Pope Francis
(Angelus 12 November 2023)

Many times, we are very careful about our appearance — the important thing is to take good care of one's image and make a good impression in front of others. But Jesus says that the wisdom of life lies elsewhere: in taking care of what cannot be seen but is more important; taking care of the heart. Nurturing an inner life. This means knowing how to stop and listen to one's heart, to keep watch over one's own thoughts and feelings. How often are we unaware of what has happened in our heart on a [given] day? What happens within each one of us? Wisdom means knowing how to make room for silence, in order to be able to listen to ourselves and to others. It means knowing how to give up some of the time spent in front of telephone screens, to look at the light in the eyes of others, in one's own heart, in God's gaze upon us. It means not falling into the trap of activism, but devoting time to the Lord, to listening to his Word.

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Ps 87: 3

Let my prayer come into your presence.
Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God,
graciously keep from us all adversity,
so that, unhindered in mind and body alike,
we may pursue in freedom of heart
the things that are yours.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Wisdom. Wisdom 6:12-16

Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her and is found by those who seek her. She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her. He who rises early to seek her will have no difficulty, for he will find her sitting at his gates. To fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding, and he who is vigilant on her account will soon be free from care, because she goes about seeking those worthy of her, and she graciously appears to them in their paths and meets them in every thought.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 63(62):2. 3-4. 5-6. 7-8. R.2b

R. For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord, my God.

O God, you are my God; at dawn I seek you;
for you my soul is thirsting.
For you my flesh is pining,
like a dry, weary land without water. **R.**

I have come before you in the sanctuary,
to behold your strength and your glory.
Your loving mercy is better than life;
my lips will speak your praise. **R.**

I will bless you all my life;
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet;
with joyful lips, my mouth shall praise you. **R.**

When I remember you upon my bed,
On you I muse through the watches of the night.
For you have been my strength;
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice. **R.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

For shorter form read between [ ]

[We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.] For this we declare to you by the word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. 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, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Alleluia, alleluia. Matthew 24:42a, 44
Stay awake and be ready,
for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 25:1-13

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time: Jesus told his disciples this parable, 'The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise answered, saying, "Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves." And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." But he answered, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you." Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look with favour, we pray, O Lord,
upon the sacrificial gifts offered here,
that, celebrating in mystery the Passion of your Son,
we may honour it with loving devotion.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Ps 22: 1-2

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose,
near restful waters he leads me.

Or:

Cf. Lk 24: 35

The disciples recognized the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by this sacred gift, O Lord,
we give you thanks and beseech your mercy,
that, by the pouring forth of your Spirit,
the grace of integrity may endure
in those your heavenly power has entered.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.