

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

My beloved brothers and sisters, when we were small children, we often heard our teachers and our parents say to us: “You’ve got to share!” Therefore, when we hear this gospel story, our automatic response is: the wise virgins are being selfish and mean! But, that’s not the case.

The role of the young girls, the virgins, in the ancient world, was to be the welcoming committee for the bridegroom, and to lead them into the bridegroom’s home after the wedding. In the ancient Jewish world and the culture of the Middle East, even to this day, hospitality was one of the most important things in life. This was the serious responsibility of the young women providing light to light the way. To give away their oil would be to shirk their responsibility: there was simply not enough oil to provide for ten lamps. The simple point that Jesus is teaching in this gospel story, is this: “I cannot borrow the light of faith from any other person! I must be responsible for my own faith formation!”

In the first reading, Wisdom was understood by the ancient philosophers as the key to a meaningful and fulfilled life. It was not the wisdom of the world; rather, the precious jewel of the Wisdom of God, which must be desired above all things and acquired by our personal and energetic quest! Everything else was secondary to this quest. This is still true for us today. This Wisdom is God Himself, and His infinite Divine Mercy and Love grasped and experienced by the human heart, which comes by constant prayer and unrelenting fidelity to Him. The world for each of us, will come to an end; however, this relationship with our God is everlasting fulfillment and joy that knows no bounds!

God has given each of us this possibility, but we may never presume it, it requires our hard work and constant effort! All of us have been given this personal responsibility by God, and most especially in those who have been Baptized and Confirmed and in my Holy Orders. This is the greatest sign of His infinite love for us. To fail to take this personal responsibility is to find ourselves locked out in the outer darkness, without light like the foolish virgins! This personal responsibility means constantly working on our personal friendship with God. It means this

must be the highest goal of our lives; but God will not force His friendship upon us, because that is not love, that would be slavery!

Today, we are each being asked the question: Is the first priority in life my relationship with God in Christ and His Kingdom? Is my life, my lamp filled to the brim with the Life and Light of Jesus Christ? Am I keeping this lamp, my life, filled by persevering in constant prayer and the use of the Sacraments, constantly enriching my life by studying the Word of God and the writings of the Saints and understanding my faith through the Catechism?