Our Sunday Readings

Keeping Vigil

WISDOM 6:12-16

Reading closely
1. Why do you think the author describes Wisdom as radiant and unfading?
2. What sort of people seek Wisdom?
3. How eagerly do people seek her?
4. How eagerly does Lady Wisdom seek people?
5. How do people who seek Wisdom know when they’ve found her?
6. What all might people who aren’t seeking Wisdom be doing instead?

Living the word
7. What do you think wisdom is?
8. Have you ever sought wisdom? Did you find it?
9. Do you seek friendships with people you consider wise? Why/Why not?

THE FIRST READING

Lady Wisdom
In the Old Testament God’s wisdom is personified as a woman. Lady Wisdom walks through the streets, calling out for people to learn from her. She hosts grand banquets at which people feast on her words (Proverbs 9).

Seeking
Lady Wisdom doesn’t hide herself, but people must still persist in seeking her and learning from her. God makes every effort to draw close to people. Those who take time to pray and reflect on how they can more truly follow God will grow in virtue and peace.

Unfading
Wisdom is beautiful and permanent. Those who seek her find happiness and eternal life. Those who reject Wisdom and seek their own path will, in the end, find only death (Wisdom 1:16f).

Resplendent and unfading is Wisdom, and she is readily perceived by those who love her...

by Edrianne Ezell | oursundayreadings.wordpress.com | eezell3@gmail.com

November 8, 2020  Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time  Cycle A
THE GOSPEL READING

Jewish weddings

During Jewish weddings of this era the groom would bring his bride from her house into his (or his father’s). A feast was then held to celebrate the occasion. The ten virgins or maidens are waiting for the groom to arrive home with his bride. They will then go out to meet him and accompany him and his new wife back to his home.

The women have brought oil lamps. Once the wick burns through the oil, they will have to add more or the lamp will go out. If the wise women share the oil they had the foresight to bring, there might not be enough to go around and all the lamps could go out, which would notably diminish a happy, festive occasion.

Allegorical elements

Parts of the parable are allegorical: Jesus is the groom, the groom’s arrival is the Last Judgment, and the wedding feast is God’s kingdom. Other parts aren’t allegorical: the oil and the women don’t represent anything or anyone in particular.

Repeated warnings

The parable echoes Jesus’ warning that many will cry, “Lord, Lord,” but will not enter God’s kingdom (7:21-23). It also recalls the story of the foolish person who built a house on sand and the wise person who built on rock (7:24-27).

Stay awake

All of the women dozed off, but only some of them had thought to bring extra oil. Stay awake (v.13) is thus a metaphor for being prepared. Even when the groom was “long delayed,” five of the women still didn’t think to prepare themselves. The parable leaves open the question of why some of the women didn’t plan ahead.

The story focuses on the unexpected arrival of God’s kingdom. Everyone must be ready at all times – whether asleep or awake – for Christ to return. How to remain awake is a question we must each ask ourselves.

MATTHEW 25:1-13

Reading closely

1. What might be the mood among the ten women?
2. Why do you think five of the women thought to bring extra oil?
3. How do you think the women initially reacted to the long wait?
4. Was it wrong for the women to sleep?
5. Would you have stayed and waited?
6. How do the women react to the news that the groom has arrived?
7. Would you have shared your oil?
8. How would you feel if you had to go buy oil?
9. How would you feel if you were among those who went into the feast with the groom?
10. If you returned to find the door locked, how would you have felt?
11. Why do you think the groom doesn’t recognize the five women?
12. What does this parable teach you about God’s kingdom?

Living the word

13. What makes a person foolish?
14. What makes a person wise?
15. In what ways are you like the wise women?
16. In what ways are you like the foolish ones?
17. How do we stay awake?

PRAYER

by St. Anselm of Canterbury

O Lord, you are my Lord and my God, yet I have never seen you. You have created and redeemed me and have conferred on me all my goods, yet I know you not. I was created in order that I might know you, but I have not yet attained the goal of my creation.

I confess, O Lord, and give you thanks that you have created me in your image, so that I might be mindful of you and contemplate you and love you.

I seek not to understand in order that I may believe; rather, I believe in order that I may understand.