Homily for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
Sunday, November 8, 2026

Wisdom 6:12–16 | 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 | Matthew 25:1–13








KEEP YOUR LAMP BURNING — IS THERE ENOUGH OIL?

Let me begin with a little story. A man was preparing for an important trip abroad. He was very proud of how carefully he had planned everything. His wife asked him, "Darling, are you sure you have everything ready?" "Of course!" he replied confidently. "My flight is booked, my hotel is reserved, my suitcase is packed, my travel insurance is arranged, and my phone is fully charged!" His wife smiled and asked, "Wonderful! And where is your passport?" Suddenly, there was a long silence. Then he whispered, "Oh! I thought you had packed it for me!"

He had prepared everything — except the one thing he needed most!

Isn't that sometimes the story of our own lives?

We prepare for our careers, our retirement, our financial security, and our children's future.

But how well are we preparing for our eternal future?

If God were to call us home tonight, would we be ready?

1. The Lamp Is Not Enough — We Need Oil

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us the parable of the ten bridesmaids.

All ten were invited to the wedding. All ten carried lamps. And interestingly, all ten fell asleep!

But when the bridegroom arrived at midnight, only five were ready.

What made the difference?

Not their lamps, but the oil inside them.

The lamps represent the gift of life and faith. The oil represents the love, goodness, prayer, and faithfulness that keep our relationship with God alive. We may have a beautiful crucifix hanging in our home, but do we forgive those who hurt us? We may carry a rosary in our pocket, but do we take time to pray? We may attend Mass every Sunday, but how do we treat others on Monday?

A beautiful lamp without oil cannot give light. And a beautiful religious appearance without love cannot reveal Jesus Christ.

There is something else worth remembering.

In the ancient world, wedding celebrations often included a procession with lamps or torches. The guests needed enough oil to keep their flames burning until the bridegroom arrived.

And here is the deeper lesson: **We can borrow many things in life, but we cannot borrow someone else's holiness.**

We cannot borrow our parents' faith to replace our own commitment.

We cannot borrow another person's good deeds to replace the love we have failed to give.

Each of us must prepare our own heart to meet the Lord.

2. Let me tell you a story

Saint Philip Neri was known not only for his holiness. According to a traditional story, he was once invited to an elegant dinner by a wealthy gentleman who wanted to impress his guests by having a famous saint at his table.

But imagine everyone's surprise when Philip arrived **with only half his beard shaved off!** Some guests laughed. Others were completely shocked! Why would a holy priest make himself look so ridiculous? Because Philip wanted to teach a beautiful lesson about humility. He was willing to look foolish in the eyes of others rather than become proud of his reputation for holiness.

And that brings us back to today's Gospel.

We sometimes spend so much time making our lamps look beautiful that we forget to put oil inside them! God is not impressed by our appearance. He looks into our hearts. It is better to have a simple lamp full of oil than a golden lamp with no flame.

3. Death Is Not the End of Our Story

In the second reading, Saint Paul gives us a beautiful message of hope.

He tells us not to grieve like those who have no hope.

Notice that Paul does not say Christians must never cry.

When we lose someone we love, tears are natural.

When a father or mother dies, we grieve.

When we lose a husband, a wife, or a beloved child, our hearts may be broken. Even Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus. But Christian faith gives us something greater than sorrow.

Death does not have the final word. The risen Christ does.

During this month of November, we remember and pray for our beloved departed. When we visit a cemetery, we are not simply remembering the past. We are also proclaiming our hope in the future resurrection. For those who believe in Jesus Christ, the grave is not the end of love. It is a place where sorrow and hope meet, as we await the day when we shall be reunited in God's presence.

4. Wisdom Means Knowing What Truly Matters

In our first reading, the Book of Wisdom tells us that wisdom is radiant and never fades. Those who sincerely seek her will find her.

Today, we live in a world of extraordinary technology.

Our smartphones can answer almost any question. Artificial intelligence can process enormous amounts of information.

But technology cannot make the most important moral decisions for us.

It cannot decide whether we will forgive someone who has wounded us.

It cannot choose honesty for us when nobody is watching.

It cannot love the poor and the forgotten in our place.

Knowledge helps us understand how to live. Wisdom helps us understand what we are living for.

And true wisdom begins when we recognize that our lives belong to God.

5. A Message for Our Parish Community

Brothers and sisters, this Gospel also speaks to us as a Church.

We can build beautiful churches, restore bell towers, decorate our altars, and celebrate magnificent liturgies.

All these things are valuable. But if our community lacks compassion, forgiveness, and concern for the lonely, the sick, and the poor, we may have beautiful lamps without enough oil.

As our St. John Parish in Ladprao celebrates its 40th anniversary, we should ask ourselves: Have we built only beautiful buildings, or have we also built hearts filled with God's love?

Have we created merely a parish organization, or have we become a genuine family where everyone feels welcome?

The true beauty of a church is not measured only by its walls, but by the love that shines from the hearts of its people.

Conclusion — Do Not Wait Until Midnight

Jesus concludes today's Gospel with these words: "Stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour." He does not say this to frighten us.

He says it because our lives are precious, and every day is an opportunity to love.

If there is someone you need to forgive, do it today.

If you have neglected your prayer, begin again today.

If you have forgotten to tell your family that you love them, tell them today.

If you have wandered away from God, come home today.

Do not wait until midnight to discover that your lamp has no oil.

For when the Bridegroom finally comes, what will matter most will not be how much money we have earned, how many titles we have received, or how successful we have become.

What will matter is **how deeply we have loved God and one another.**

And may we be able to say to the Lord, with peaceful and joyful hearts:

"Lord, my lamp is still burning. I am ready, because I have tried to love You throughout my life." Amen.

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