

Homily for the 32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, 11/08/20

Image this! We hear a news alert on our radio, TV, weather channel, etc. A fierce hurricane is aimed here at New York and to be exact the eye of the storm is focused right here on New Rochelle. What would you do? There are a lot of options. 1. Do nothing as it never happened before. 2. Take minimal precautions and just ride the storm out or 3. find a shelter? Just think about what has happened this year in New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico! Of course, the key to survival is to take precautions. The church is always a wise teacher. It always ends and begins the liturgical year talking about the final coming of Jesus. This Sunday and for the next two Sundays we will hear Jesus' parables about judgments. Today, we read about the *five wise bridesmaids* and *five foolish bridesmaids*, next week the parable of the *three talents* and the week after the parable of the *final judgment*.

I must, however, admit that today's parable about the bridesmaids is a really a strange story to our 21st Century ears. It is a story about a **wedding** and the bride is never mentioned. We are never told why the bridesmaids have lamps or why the groom is delayed. Or why a reception would begin at midnight or why stores would be open in the middle of the night to buy oil for the lamps. Yet, I think these were all things with which Jesus's audience were probably familiar with and simply accepted.

Jesus uses this parable to teach people about his **final coming**. It will catch people off-guard just as the late bridegroom catches the foolish bridesmaids off-guard. The point of this parable is for us to **be ready**, to be prepared to meet the Lord at the moment of our death. We do not want to hear the terrible words of the groom – “/ *don't know you!*”

The clue to today's parable is the meaning of the oil and the lamps. We have a hint about its meaning if we remember that

Jesus in the Sermon of the Mount told us: “So let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify my heavenly father.” So the **lamp oil** is our **good deeds** or good works and they cannot be shared.

There is a practical application to this parable today. We are to remind ourselves that we cannot be procrastinators in living our faith. Remember: “*manana never comes!*” One of our favorite excuses is we are too busy but do you think the Lord will buy that excuse when we meet Him at the hour our death? I don’t think so!

There is an old saying that life is not a dress-rehearsal. **Now is the day of salvation for us, isn’t it!**

Yes, if a storm was coming to the New York area what would you do?