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

There is a natural temptation to feel sorry for the foolish bridesmaids. After all, it wasn't really there fault that the groom was late and couldn't the wise virgins have shared their oil with them? To think like this is to miss the point. The oil symbolises personal virtue, something that is impossible to share with others. Those with full oil flasks are those who live faithful and loving lives, active in good deeds.
Jesus teaches us that simply belonging to the wedding party – The Church – isn't enough, we must back it up with good works. In Matthew's Gospel we learn that these good works include bearing witness to God's kingdom by welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and imprisoned (25:31-46), and making disciples of all nations (28:19-20). We must live vigilantly, undertaking the tasks that we have been appointed to do, in preparation for the Master's return.

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.

Communion Antiphon

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.

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.

Thirty-Second Sunday

Year A

8th November 2026

Keep Watch and Being Prepared

As we approach the end of the liturgical year (just one Sunday remaining before the feast of Christ the King), we begin reading chapter 25 of Matthew's Gospel, set just before Jesus' passion and crucifixion. Jesus is teaching about the 'end times' - the reign of God – and he calls on us to 'stay awake', 'to be watchful', 'to be ready' to greet the Lord when he comes again. Let us renew our efforts in our busy lives to be still, to find space, to reflect: 'Am I ready to greet the Lord?' Because without doubt he will come on a day and at an hour we do not know. Let us use this God given time to draw closer to the Lord and to our neighbour.

Entrance Antiphon

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.

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

The Book of Wisdom is attributed to King Solomon (991 BC), but in fact, it is much later, written in the last century B.C., influenced greatly by modern Greek thought. Today's passage reflects on the quest for wisdom. Wisdom, the author teaches, is an attribute of God, who alone possesses it in it's fullness and in which he allows us to share. Therefore, to possess wisdom is to possess God. This gift of life if offered to all, but we must be 'awake' and 'ready' to recognize and welcome it.

After his conversion in his thirties, St Augustine reflected:

"Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient... You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you... You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you... You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace."

PSALM: 63(62):2 -8.

Response: *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.

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.

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.

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.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

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

To understand today's confusing passage from Thessalonians we need to appreciate that at the time of writing, Paul had been persuaded that he would live to see the return of Christ, but at the same time, he uses imagery from Jewish apocalyptic writings to describe the resurrection of believers. The clear message remains, however: 'Christ will come again.' This is the source of our hope and consolation.

Alleluia, Stay awake and be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Alleluia! Alleluia!

MATTHEW 25: 1-13

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