

Thirty-Second Sunday, Ordinary Time
November 8, 2020

First, a brief look at the readings for the Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time. The first reading from the Old Testament Book of Wisdom once again presents Wisdom as a lady, *“resplendent and unfading.”* She waits in anticipation for those who truly seek her. In this Wisdom, we begin our preparation in this life as we look toward the next. The Responsorial Psalm also speaks of seeking for the things of God. *“Thus will I bless you while I live”*; in these words, we move a little deeper into our preparations to meet the Almighty. The second reading from I Thessalonians provides the reassurance that if we prepare in this life, though we may die in the flesh, we will rise again to great the Lord. Finally, the Good News as proclaimed by St. Matthew, continues to testify to the preparation called for as we go through the trials of this earth.

As we, once again, approach the Advent Season at the end of this month, the Church calls us to begin to focus our hearts and minds on our preparation for the coming of the Baby Jesus. I think you can guess the theme for today’s reflection. Just in case you missed it, we are being called to “prepare.” This begs two questions from us: “What does this preparation consist of?”; “What am I doing to prepare myself?” I shall attempt to give you my own thoughts on these two questions. However, only you can answer the second question for yourself.

First. What does this preparation consist of? Is it as simple as “Do Good; Avoid Evil”? Yes and no. Yes, this is certainly part of the answer. And no, God did not promise that it would be easy or simple. It is Noah’s faith that built a boat before the rain came (Heb 11:7). It is the Blessed Mother’s “YES,” her answer *“May it be done to me according to your word”* (Lk 1:38). It is to take up your cross and follow Jesus, even to Calvary (Mat 16:24). It is like the five wise virgins, in today’s Gospel reading, coming prepared to wait for the coming of the bridegroom. It is praying without ceasing (I Thess 5:17). It is study of Sacred Scripture. It is ‘Love God; Love Neighbor’. I told you it isn’t simple. It is a constant conversion to a Christ-like life.

Second. What am I doing to prepare myself? As I said, I am going to give you my thoughts, but each of you must answer this question for yourself. You can’t answer for your spouse. You can’t answer for your children. You can’t answer for your neighbor. Just like the answer to the first question, neither is this one simple. It calls for a constant examination of conscious, an examination of self. For this answer, we must look to the singular “I”: “I” did; “I” did not. “What I have done and what I have failed to do.” Those moments of anger at spouse or children or neighbor. Those fits of road rage. Laughing at an off-color joke. Then there is procrastination. And, failure to “hate the sin, but love the sinner”.

After these two questions, but one more must be answered: In which group do you want to be; the five foolish virgins, unprepared, left out; or the five wise virgins who are celebrating at the wedding feast?