



Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
November 8, 2020

Get Ready

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

As we near the end of the liturgical year and prepare for Advent, the readings get us ready for the Second Coming of Jesus by addressing our own final encounter with him. The Church summarizes the last realities each person must reflect on: death, judgment, heaven, and hell. In short, when we die, we will face personal judgment. If our response has been to return Jesus' love, the reward will be heaven. But if we reject Jesus, the result will be hell.

This should not be a source of anxiety or fear, but rather faith, serenity, and

hopeful confidence. If we are not quite ready, now is the age of mercy, and God's grace abounds for those who seek it. It is a healthy thing to be prepared and wise. All of us know our final encounter with Jesus at the end of life is coming. It would be foolish to ignore it or not maturely reflect on its implications.

Oil is the natural resource mentioned in the Gospel because without the light and warmth that an oil lamp provided, the guests could get lost in the dark or need to abandon the wait because of the cold. As we journey through this life, awaiting the marriage feast of Jesus, our hearts can get dimmed and icy if we are not lit by the oil of love and the warmth of the Spirit. We don't know the day or the hour when Jesus will come take us into the eternal banquet, but we know for sure that day is coming.

The wise guest is the person fueled by the oil of love and ready for any eventuality. As the Boy Scout motto goes—Be Prepared. +

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A Word from Pope Francis

The study of the sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer.... Evangelization demands familiarity with God's word, which calls for dioceses, parishes, and Catholic associations to provide for a serious, ongoing study of the Bible, while encouraging its prayerful individual and communal reading.

—*Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013



Sunday Readings

Wisdom 6:12-16

Resplendent and unfading is Wisdom, and she is ... found by those who seek her

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 or 4:13-14

If we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Matthew 25:1-13

[Jesus said,] "Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Am I constantly in contact with the mercy of God so I am always ready?
- How am I living now so that I am always prepared for the final encounter with Jesus?

Translating the Message

By Johan van Parys

My nieces and nephews are great kids—intelligent and kind—and I'm proud to be their uncle. Still, I regret their lack of participation in the life of the Church. From what other parishioners tell me, this is happening all around, not just in my family. Why are we losing so many young people? Why doesn't the Gospel message get through to them?

This issue of the best way to communicate the Gospel can be traced back to the apostles. Think about our Church's beginning—the time of Pentecost. Outside the Upper Room, I imagine great festivity as people from many regions and nations gathered in Jerusalem. Inside the Upper Room, the apostles were hiding, burdened with fear and uncertainty. Then suddenly everything changed. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the apostles overcame their fear and burst into the street. The sight of the apostles, on fire with the Spirit as they spoke about God's marvelous deeds, must have quieted the crowd. Miraculously, everyone was able to understand them despite ethnic differences and linguistic barriers.

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From Jerusalem, the apostles spread throughout the world proclaiming the Good News to every nation known to humankind. They succeeded because they presented the Gospel truth in different languages through various channels.

Successful missionary activity has always relied on the translation of the one and true message into the vernacular and familiar idioms of the people receiving the message. The failures of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century mission attempts in China were attributed to the Church's refusal to allow a Chinese Catholic rite that would have included "baptismal" pre-Christian theological language and accommodated ancestor worship, which was very dear

to them. On the flip side, the success of the Church's mission in Central Africa has been ascribed to the introduction of a Congolese rite that considers the ethos of Central Africa and allows typical African modes of celebration.

As we preach the Gospel in our current, ever-changing reality, we can do one of two things: turn inward and hide in a romanticized understanding of our perceived glorious past, or find new ways to preach the Gospel. The first option might prove disastrous as the Church continues to crumble. The second, though not easy, offers hope—and the promise of a Church ever new and true.

Let us listen carefully to the spiritual needs of our people, learn to understand and speak their languages, and use their idioms wisely to spread the Good News. Let us pray for the knowledge and courage to do what needs to be done.

Finally, let us pray for the safe return of loved ones whose journeys have led them away from our Church. +

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Help me to keep awake to the movement of your Spirit in my life.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 9–14

Monday, Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (Rome): Ez 47:1–2, 8–9, 12 / 1 Cor 3:9c–11, 16–17 / Jn 2:13–22


Tuesday, St. Leo the Great: Ti 2:1–8, 11–14 / Lk 17:7–10

Wednesday, St. Martin of Tours: Ti 3:1–7 / Lk 17:11–19

Thursday, St. Josaphat: Phmn 7–20 / Lk 17:20–25

Friday, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini: 2 Jn 4–9 / Lk 17:26–37

Saturday, Weekday: 3 Jn 5–8 / Lk 18:1–8

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