

Lectio Divina of the 32 week in Ordinary time – A

"Be Awakened"

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for this evening of Lectio Divina to read, meditate and pray your life-giving words for our spiritual nourishment. Thank You for creating us with free will. Thank you for loving us by sending your beloved Son Jesus to save us and keep us in your love. Holy Spirit, Prepare our heart to hear Your voice and be moved to action by it. Make us steadfast in prayer. Do not let our minds and hearts be deceived. Help us to be vigilant against the enemy's spiritual attacks on us. May we come closer to you day by day through prayer and walk by faith. Bring scripture to our mind that we may be filled with your wisdom. Make us realize that our life is short and your coming is certain. Let us be ready for your return at all times living consciously and consistently in your ways no matter when your Son would come to judge us. Lord, We don't know what future holds for us but we know for sure who holds our future. You hold our future. Hence may we hold on to you and lead a meaningful, spiritual and vigilant life. Amen

First reading: A Reading from the book of Wisdom 6:12-16

Resplendent and unfading is wisdom, and she is readily perceived by those who love her, and found by those who seek her. She hastens to make herself known in anticipation of their desire; Whoever watches for her at dawn shall not be disappointed, for he shall find her sitting by his gate. For taking thought of wisdom is the perfection of prudence, and whoever for her sake keeps vigil shall quickly be free from care; because she makes her own rounds, seeking those worthy of her, and graciously appears to them in the ways, and meets them with all solicitude. (The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God)

Commentary: An ordinary Jew understood wisdom as to have a good conduct in speech and grow in success and advancement and to live life free of the anxiety, hostility, opposition, and failure. Young Jewish men were trained by good scribes to live in such manners. But in today's first reading, the author of the book of wisdom advises the Jews in Alexandria to seek wisdom of God, revealed in the Sacred Scripture and thus order their lives to reach eternal life.

Responsorial Psalm 63: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water. R. **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary to see your power and your glory, For your kindness is a greater good than life; my lips shall glorify you. R. **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

Thus will I bless you while I live; lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name. As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied, and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you. R. **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

I will remember you upon my couch, and through the night-watches I will meditate on you: You are my help, and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy. R. **My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

Commentary: David was hiding from his enemies in the barren desert of Judah. He was intensely lonely. He longed for a friend he could trust to ease his loneliness. In his emotional moment, he cried out, " O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water" He finds his deepest longings satisfied in God.

**Second Reading: A Reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians
4:13-18**

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, 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. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words. (The word of the Lord / Thanks be to God)

Commentary: Our life does not end with death, because our soul is immortal and lives forever. Unlike those who have no hope, we, believers, should not be saddened by the prospect of death (the opening verse of today's reading), because we hope in the resurrection of our bodies at the end of time, when our Lord comes again in glory. St. Paul describes this second coming as an event of great solemnity, an event accompanied by an angel's call and the sound of a trumpet. He exhorts the Christians to be ready for the second coming of Jesus and asks them to be vigilant in order not to miss his return.

Gospel Reading: a reading from the holy gospel according to St. 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 out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise ones replied, 'No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.' While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.' Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour." (The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.)

Meditation on the Gospel: The gospel presents the parable of the ten virgins and we need the biblical background of Palestinian wedding during Jesus' time to understand the hidden meaning. In Palestine, the wedding was a week-long celebration and the whole village lined up at the sides of the road to wish God's blessings on the bride being taken in procession by her groom to her new home. The invitees would join the procession from the bride's house to groom's house. Since the bridegroom might come anytime to the bride's house, the virgins (bridesmaids in our day) used to carrying lighted torches and reserve oil in jars. Five virgins had enough and more oil and five virgins forgot to bring an extra jar of oil and so missed the arrival of the groom's party and lost their chance to take part in the celebration.

The meaning of the parable: This parable has both a local and a universal meaning. The local meaning is that the foolish virgins represent the "Chosen People of God"

who were waiting for the Messiah but were denied access to the messianic banquet because they were unprepared. The universal meaning is that the five foolish virgins represent those who fail to prepare for the end of their lives. The last minute business may not help in our spiritual life. Vigilance is needed each and every moment.

The allegorical meaning of the parable: The bridegroom is Christ. The virgins represent the Church that is waiting for Christ's Second Coming. The delay of the Bridegroom corresponds to the delay of the Second Coming. The closing of the door is the final judgment. The oil is our personal relationship with God. Oil could also mean our Christian character and values which we cannot borrow at the last minute. It has to grow within us and we need to germinate them prayerfully each and every minute for the fruition.

Messages for our life: 1. Our Christian life is a decisive and definite choice to put Jesus in everything we do. We need to find Him in the most ordinary experiences of daily life -in the people we meet, in the events that happen and in the situations we find ourselves. If we live, love and have our beings in Him, we will be ready at any time for our final call. When we hear "Get up! The Master is coming!", We will not be worried instead we will only be happy to meet Him as well as our old friends and family, in Heaven.

2. We should keep our baptismal candle and spiritual lamps burning brightly all the time. Spiritual readiness, preparation and growth do not just happen. They come as a result of our intentional habits, built into our life. The Holy Eucharist, Prayer life, Love for the Holy Bible, desire for Sacramental life, doing charitable activities, being faithful in life and being a christian in any thing we say and do are the marks of Christian life for our lamps to burn brightly and to join the blissful company of Jesus. Life is so beautiful and at the same time very uncertain. Our Final call can come anytime and hence let us be prepared and awakened in our life. Amen

Concluding prayer: *Lord Jesus, On the eve of your death You asked of Your apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Could you not watch one hour with Me?" Your friends had fallen asleep. Soon soldiers arrived with torches and ropes to arrest You and lead You away to torture, trial and Crucifixion. Help us, Lord, to remain awake to Your call and ever vigilant for Your coming. Where error appears, let your truth correct us. Where our faith is weak, increase our faith. Where our hope falters, let us give encouragement. Where charity is absent, let us sow love. Let us always light candles of faith, hope and charity to keep our christian life going smoothly and steadily with no major stumbling. Give us vigilance in our daily life. You are the fountain of life and in your light may we see light. Mother Most Prudent, Pray for us. (Hail Mary/ Blessing)*