## A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM

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

## A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

Brothers and Sisters: You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

## THE WORD OF THE LORD

**Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps 63(62):2. 3-4. 5-6. 7-8. ℟2b**

*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.

*For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord, my God.*

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.

*For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord, my God.*

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.

*For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord, my God.*

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.

*For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord, my God.*

## THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

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.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

Stay awake and be ready,

for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Alleluia.

## A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

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At that time: Jesus told his disciples this parable, ‘The kingdom of heaven will be like ten Bridesmaids 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 Bridesmaids 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 the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterwards the other Bridesmaids 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.’

## REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

They got it wrong! The girls try to get the groom away from his family to the bride's place for the wedding. That's the best man and his team who are supposed to do that, keep him sober and in a good mood to enjoy it and not be too stressed about it. I worked that out after 60 years. Bridesmaids should be there to look after the bride. What was going on?

The parable is about being organised and talking a committed responsibility for what is your opportunity. Some of the bridesmaids were serious; the others seem to have just not taken it seriously. They let themselves down and those who trusted them. This is one of Jesus' parables about commitment, Jesus telling us of the promise that awaits us provided we buy into it and are willing to put it high in our priorities, like the story of the rich man and Lazarus who was poor and lived by begging for scraps.

The joy of a full commitment of a follower of Christ is already present as well as in the future. A sense of hope in God that even when one issue dominates our minds, trust in God will bring us the strength and healing we need. One elderly nun told my mother after one of my less successful ventures that God will always open another door that I might find fulfilment in another direction.

A religious service like a joyful wedding or a Canon's installation at the cathedral has that sense of everyone united in heart and soul wanting this new venture to succeed, praying for others joy and fulfilment in what they are going to do. Catholics do not expect to get everything we ask for in the way we think we want it. Our hope is based on things invisible and unforeseen, in God who came into our world to enable his human creation, made in his likeness to grow, love and hope in a compassionate way of reconciliation and selflessness wanting the good of another. We soon begin the time of Advent with its constant theme of be ready, today's parable reminds us not to be shut out because we did not see the signs in ourselves where we were missing an opportunity.