

FR. JOHN'S GOSPEL REFLECTION

November 6, 2011

Today both the First Reading and the Gospel according to Matthew talk about wisdom. In the First Reading, wisdom is an attribute of God or God himself. Indeed, God is readily perceived by those who love him and found by those who seek him. God makes himself known to whoever desires him. God is always at the gate of whoever watches for him. God always seeks those worthy of him and graciously appears to them in their ways and meets them with all paternal solicitude. By the way, reread the Responsorial Psalm. It says He is the God our soul should thirst and hunger for.

In the passage of Gospel according to Matthew we have heard, five of the ten virgins that take their lamps and go out to meet the bridegroom are wise and five are not. The bridegroom is Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. The bride is the Church. The ten virgins represent the members of the Church or Christians. The lamp could be compare to the faith. In many places Scripture refer to the lamp of faith – *"Her lamp does not go out at night (Pr. 31:18); "No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket..."*(Mt. 5:15); *"Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit"*(Lk. 12:35).

The oil is the symbol of good deeds or the works of faith. *"So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."* (Jas 2:17); *"For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead."* (Jas 2:36)

Here, wisdom is a gift from God to human being that could be defined as knowledge, insight and judgment. Wisdom as gift consists of scientific and precise learning (knowledge), ability to discern inner qualities and relationships (insight) and good sense (judgment).

On the one hand, the grace of wisdom helps to keep our faith lightened and alive, which means never give up in faith, never fall asleep in faith, but stay always awake in faith. On the other hand, the grace of wisdom helps us have oil in reserve or to perform works of faith such as love of God: be firm in faith, love Church and care for her, attend Mass on Sundays and days of obligation, make frequent good Confession, receive properly the Eucharist, be faithful to one's state of life like priesthood, religious life and marriage and love of others above all children, elders, sick, homeless, refugees, prisoners and poor.

This is the choice and life of the five wise virgins. They stayed awake in faith by loving God and neighbors. As result they were ready to meet Jesus Christ, the bridegroom on any day and at any hour for the last judgment and went into the wedding feast or the kingdom of heaven.

Church is calling us today to become wise like the five wise Virgins and to stay awake in faith in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven the final goal of our life.

Amen