



The Parish of St Matthew's North Fawkner
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32nd SUNDAY in Ordinary Time, Year A — November 8, 2020

This Sunday's readings bring the usual warnings about preparation for the end of our own world, the end of our own time and our passage to another world.

Life messages:

We need to be wise enough to remain ever prepared: Wise Christians live each day in the light of Jesus' vision. Such people find Him in the most ordinary experiences of daily living — in the people they meet, the events that take place, and the situations in which they find themselves. They carefully make their daily choices for God. They are ready to put the commandment of love into practice by kindness and forgiveness. There is absolutely no better way to prepare for the final call than to learn to spend each day in the company of Jesus, remembering his assurance, "I am with you always." (being vigilant waiting for the Lord's return). The following short prayer should be always on our lips:

"Lord, grant that all my thoughts, intentions, actions and responses may be directed solely to Your love and service this day." "Help me, Lord, to seek, to find, and to respond to You in every single experience this day."

When we eventually hear the final call, **"Get up! The Master is coming!"** We will not be worried, but happy and more than ready to meet Him, as well as old friends and family, in Heaven. God has made this promise to us: "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever"

Let us be sure that our Lamps are ready for the end of our lives: Spiritual readiness, preparation and growth do not just happen. They come as a result of intentional habits built into one's life. We cannot depend on a Sunday morning service to provide all our spiritual needs. We cannot depend on Christian fellowship to provide us with spiritual development. These things come through routine, mundane attention to ordinary spiritual disciplines — making sure we have enough oil: spiritual fuel. They come when we habitually take time for prayer and being alone with God. They come through reading God's Word; living a sacramental life; performing acts of service for others; being morally faithful; obeying God with love, and spending time with other Christians for mutual prayer, study, and encouragement. These are the things which, along with the normal difficulties of life, enable a person to grow in Christ and to be prepared for Christ's coming. Without these things we will not be prepared. The preparation cannot be hit-or-miss, nor can it be postponed. We dare not procrastinate, lest death come unexpectedly and ruin us. We need to develop those things which encourage our spiritual growth into holy habits in our lives, for that growth must take precedence over other interests and claims on our time and attention. As these habits become entrenched, they cease to be a struggle for us and begin to be a source of strength and blessing. They make our lives powerful against the onslaught of the world.

Recently Deceased: Damiano Ambrosini, Mimma Muni , Michele Malarbi, Carmelita Mangaliman

Anniversaries: Antonio Esmaquel, Leo Montealegre

The sick in our parish: Teresa and Con Lamonaca, Carmela Bovezza, Eleanor Priest, Nola, Leanne Branchflower, Kathy Romanow, Judiel Teodoro, John Markis, Frank Cichello, Rosa Latanzio, and, Peter Corcoran

Introduction: Our lectionary ends the Church's liturgical year with texts about the coming of the Son of Man, which leads into the New Year's Season of Advent — the Season of "Coming." Jesus' future coming as the conquering Son of Man at the end of time and his past coming as the helpless infant in a manger are the topics of our remembrance. This Sunday's readings bring the usual warnings about preparation for the end of our own world, the end of our own time and our passage to another world. They tell us that a searching, watching, and growing heart is essential for a lively, dynamic faith in God. They ask us whether we are ready for these events and how we are preparing for them.

"Be prepared" and "Don't run out of gas.": One thing that all Scouts, young and old, never forget is the Boy Scout Motto: "Be prepared." If you've ever set up a tent and didn't tie your lines securely, you know what happens when the wind and rain hits! A tent-collapse in the middle of the night is a rude awakening! Or, if you get a brand-new pair of hiking boots and don't properly break them in, then go on a ten-mile hike, it's pretty painful! You might forget bug-spray during mosquito season. Or if you bring a flashlight on a campout, but not extra batteries; that can make it somewhat challenging finding the latrine in the middle of the night! We sometimes learn the hard way to anticipate our needs. We need to plan ahead, before it's too late. It was not raining when Noah built the ark! Through the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus warns us to be ever prepared for the end of our lives. How many of you have ever run out of gas? In most audiences, this would be nearly everyone. I cannot verify these statistics, so I caution you that they may be flawed. It would appear that every year at least a half million people call for help because they have run out of gas. Besides flat tyres, dead batteries, and misplaced keys, running out of gas ranks right up there in the reasons why people call for roadside service. One might understand this happening a generation ago, when gas gauges were not entirely accurate, and when all the warning lights of our day were non-existent. But now we have warning messages that our fuel is running low (giving us perhaps an hour more of driving), and then additional, progressively urgent warnings indicating just how many estimated miles of driving we have left. One must say that most people who run out of fuel are "without excuse."

Humour: A Sunday school teacher was testing the children in her class one morning to see if they understood the concept of "getting to Heaven." She said, "If I sold my house and my car, held a big garage sale and gave all my money to the Church, would that get me into Heaven?" "NO!" the children answered. "If I cleaned the Church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into Heaven?" Again, the answer was, "NO!" "Well, then, if I was kind to animals, gave candy to children and loved my husband, would that get me into Heaven?" Again, they all answered, "NO!" "Well," the teacher continued, "how do I get into Heaven?" A five-year-old boy shouted out,

"YOU GOTTA BE DEAD!"