Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (*Mt* 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."

"Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!"

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Today, we are invited to mull over the purpose of our existence; it is a warning from God about our ultimate end; let's not, therefore, play with life. "The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom" (Mt 25:1). The end of each person will depend on the path chosen; death is a consequence of the life —wise or foolish— that has been led in this world. The, foolish ones are those who have heard Jesus' message but have not put it into practice. The wise ones, on the other hand, are those who have incorporated it into their lives —that's why they enter at the wedding feast of the Kingdom.

The parable is a very serious wake-up call. "Stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Mt 25:13). Never let the lamp of faith go out, because any moment could be the last. The Kingdom is already here. Light your lamps with the oil of faith, fraternity, and mutual charity. Our hearts, full of light, will allow us to experience true joy here and now. Those around us will also be enlightened and will know the

joy of the presence of the long-awaited Bridegroom. Jesus asks us to always have that oil in our lamps.

Thus, the Second Vatican Council, choosing from the Bible the images of the Church, refers to this comparison of the bridegroom and the bride in these words: “[The Church] is described as the spotless spouse of the spotless Lamb, whom Christ ‘loved and for whom He delivered Himself up that He might sanctify her’, whom He unites to Himself by an unbreakable covenant, and whom He unceasingly ‘nourishes and cherishes’, and whom, once purified, He willed to be cleansed and joined to Himself, subject to Him in love and fidelity….” (Lumen Gentium, 6).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “It is the soul that has its door, its gates. Christ comes to this door and knocks; he knocks at these gates. Open to him; he wants to enter, to find his bride waiting and watching” (Saint Ambrose)

- “True wisdom is making the most of mortal life in order to do works of mercy, for after death this will no longer be possible” (Benedict XVI)

- “When we have spread on earth the fruits of our nature and our enterprise… according to the command of the Lord and in his Spirit, we will find them once again, cleansed this time from the stain of sin, illuminated and transfigured, when Christ presents to his Father an eternal and universal kingdom." (1 Cor 5:28). God will then be "all in all" in eternal life” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 1,050)