

**Be Ready and Prepared**      Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time      Friday, September 1,  
2017    8:15 AM    1 Thes 4:1-8;    **Mt 25:1-13**    (We are all responsible for doing  
something on this earth, and no one can make up for our not doing it.)

**“Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”**

To be honest it should say, Therefore, stay awake, **and be prepared** for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

So this is about, first of all, innocence. Ten virgins represent innocence. And what it says is that **innocence is not all that’s required to enter the kingdom.** People often think this way. “I haven’t done anything wrong.” Well, but **have you done anything right? Have you contributed anything?** Here there’s more than innocence required; there’s a requirement of some kind of contribution, **a bringing of oil.** This of course **represents the means for illumination.** The role of the bridesmaids of course was to illumine the way. It was a sort of ceremonial role.

And Jesus is using it to describe those called to the kingdom; we are supposed to illumine the way. We don’t actually make the kingdom come. That is God’s work. We don’t determine when the kingdom or in what way the kingdom will be established. That’s God’s decision, the coming of the bridegroom. That’s not in our hands. **Our role is, number one, to be ready; number two, to be prepared with oil so that we can actually illumine.** So this is all metaphorical of course; we are supposed to think about, well, **how does my life light up the way for the coming of the bridegroom?**

Now very often we attack things with what we call “common sense.” Common sense doesn’t always work in the ways of the kingdom, as parables often point out. **Parables often are contra-common sense.** Common sense would say, well, yeah, the wise virgins could have shared some of their oil, but not in the parable. That doesn’t really work. Why? Because there might not be enough. In other words, **we are all responsible for doing something on this earth, and no one can make up for our not doing it.** It’s as if we are all assigned a task and only each of us can do that task. That cannot be made up for by somebody else that does more than their share, like a Mother Teresa for example. Her work is still her work; it’s not making up for other people that aren’t doing anything. **So we are all called to innocence in one way, but we are also called to do something and provide something to light up the way for the bridegroom.**