



SAINT MARGARET
P A R I S H

Thirty Second Sunday of Ordinary Time

Cycle A

Rev. Mr. Steven Roth

Law and Order ... CSI... Criminal Minds...if you are like my Mom, I got your attention already. People love these types of shows, along with mystery novels, because they intrigue us. I think we find it exciting to figure out why something happened as it did. Through all the emotion, excuses, conflicting influences, we like to enter into the shows' drama to get at the source of what happened.

I think, in a similar way, we need to explore today's parable ... to get at the root of what happened to fully hear God speaking to us today. So as we reflect on this story...what really happened and why? First, we start, as any good investigator would, with what we do know. There were ten people waiting for the groom. Five ran out of oil while the other five were well prepared. Ultimately, the prepared five get into the wedding while the other five miss out. The question we need to figure out, why would five come unprepared?

Perhaps five were not prepared for the unexpected. So it came down to a decision between finding that great outfit to wear or going to the local store to buy oil. If you don't think there will be any unexpected difficulty, why buy more oil, I suppose.

Or maybe they just assumed there was enough oil. They had filled their oil lanterns up some time ago and while they hadn't given them any attention lately, they just assumed they were still full.

Or maybe there was one more possibility. Maybe the unprepared five didn't care. They just took for granted everything would work out and it didn't matter what choices or decisions they had made. They were invited to this wedding and that was good enough.

My friends, these possible explanations do not just pertain to the parable, nor are they limited to a TV series. These possibilities exist in our lives as well.

How often do we go through life expecting life will unfold as we plan it? Nothing out of the ordinary will happen. Yet when it does, it turns us upside down and sometimes we even lose our faith in God. If it hasn't happened to us personally, I guarantee it has happened to a family member or friend. We are unprepared.

Or how often do we just assume, relying on the past. "Well, years ago I used to bring food for the poor. I don't do it anymore. It's time for someone else to do it." Or, "I don't need to go to Confession, I went last Easter, I'm sure that's good enough." We are unprepared.

Or finally, and probably the most dangerous, we think our actions and choices don't really matter. "I know I'm a jerk...but that's who I am." Or, "God, He is a God of love, it won't matter."

This perspective has immersed especially from some people when they hear that the new translation of the consecration will no longer say "it will be shed for you and for all." Instead it now will say "for you and the many." "Oh, that excludes people." Yes it does. But if we look at this prayer it recounts Jesus offering the cup to all..."take this all of you and drink from it." However the reality is that some people refuse it. It is not God that limits His invitation. We limit it by our refusal.

Yet in this scenario and the two others, we are left unprepared for Christ as the maids were unprepared with their burned out lanterns. So, do we have time to change? Do we have time to get ready if we aren't? I don't know. What I do know...what you know...is that we have the moment right now.

Unlike those popular TV shows like CSI and Law Order, we are not only limited to looking back...looking in the past. Rather, we should, we must, look back but we are still gifted with the opportunity to look forward. This gift is not guaranteed for tomorrow. It simply is guaranteed right now. May we look at our lives and conform everything we say and do for one reason. To be ready for Christ... as a Catholic, as a believer. Let's leave the suspense and unexpected outcomes for TV and make our lives ready and certain for the Lord.