

## Fr James' homily for the Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Wisdom 6:12-16  
Second Reading: First Letter to the Thessalonians 4:13-18  
Gospel: Matthew 25: 1-13



I want to write only briefly (!) this week so that you can read [Cardinal Vincent's letter](#) also. As we enter another phase of "lockdown" in November the scriptures this week prompt us to look for ways to turn this set-back to opportunity; to be ready for the challenge of it. *(The second reading might lead us to reflect on God's purposes and our prayers for the departed in this month of November and on Remembrance Sunday. If so, that's good too, as the power and value of our personal prayer is part of what I want to talk about.)*

To use this enforced time of lockdown to our advantage is wise, and the scriptures today talk about the meaning of wisdom. From the Book of Wisdom we learn that God is seeking us out. He is looking for us. He is "coming to meet them". This is the basic wisdom of our faith: the truth is that God takes the initiative, it is he who searches for us, and when we accept that and open ourselves in trust to him, he rushes in. "I have chosen you..." says Jesus elsewhere. When we realise this, we can give up thinking of God as a distant goal maybe to be reached in the distant future, or as the prize due to us if we stack up enough virtue and spiritual "gold stars".

Instead we grow in the wisdom shown by the sensible bridesmaids in the Gospel: we will be alert in all things and at all times to the work of God's grace in us and the opportunities of God's grace around us. And in the end the Bridegroom - Jesus - can say to us that he knows us, because we have been open and honest with him. So use November well, perhaps reflecting on some of the things that Cardinal Vincent says in his letter.

- Be thankful, maybe, for what we have in our worship and in our usual freedoms from which we are now for a time separated. Let's be ready, with "lamps lit" to savour and reverence worship even more after lockdown.
- Find time to come to pray in church. Make a definite time of private prayer at home, and realise how precious your prayer is to God. He will use it. Say to the Lord that you believe he is searching for you, and welcome him into your heart.
- Review your habits and attachments. Look for a charitable work to support or someone to help or reach out to who might otherwise be overlooked.
- Use the Sacrament of Reconciliation. *(Available when church is open.)*

It is always good to be reviewing and rethinking our lives. Take the opportunity of this peculiar November to do that in a particular way, for our God is very close to us and looking for a way in. To know that is real wisdom. Amen.