

Homily 32nd Sunday Year A 2023

There are all sorts of ways of reflecting on the parables of Jesus. One is offering an explanation; another is to offer an understanding of what the people heard when the parable was told - put it in its own setting. We might try to relate it to the present day - what it says to us today.

A suggested initial response was: *That our God is a God of surprises. We never know how or when God is going to appear. For some, it could be a long-awaited and long-desired announcement; for others, it might cause alarm. For those well stocked with the oil of loving service towards their brothers and sisters, the cry is one that will fill them with joy and anticipation.*

Certainly, the idea of being ready is important but it raises the question: how do we do this? A Buddhist Monk, who was sweeping up leaves in the ground of the monastery, was asked what he would do if the end of the world was imminent. His reply was *"I would continue sweeping up the leaves!"*

If we spend our lives becoming more aware of how God is present, especially in those moments of surprise, then, even if God comes unexpectedly, it won't be a surprise - it will be more like meeting an old friend, a long-time acquaintance. Our response might even be *"Well, you took your time but very glad you're here!"*

The wise person is someone who lives 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, in the events that take place, in the situations they encounter, in incidents that take place, in fact in any situation in which they find themselves. Jesus is no stranger to them. He can bring many surprises but he will never be completely unexpected. When these people eventually hear the final call, *"Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him"*, they are not worried. They are happy and more than ready to meet their old friend face to face.

Macrina Wiederkehr writes:

God's call unfolds a Word at a time, slowly.

A disciple is not made in a hurry.

Slowly I become like the One to whom I am listening.

Life unfolds a petal at a time

like you and I becoming followers of Jesus,

discipled into a new way of living deeply and slowly.

Be patient with life's unfolding petals.

If you hurry the bud, it withers.

If you hurry life, it limps.

Each unfolding is a teaching, a movement of grace,

filled with silent pauses,

breath-taking beauty, tears and heartaches.

Life unfolds a petal at a time deeply and slowly.

May it come to pass!

"When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall. Think of it--always." Mahatma Gandhi

Whenever Jesus comes, he says: *Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with you, and you with me.* (Rev 3:20)

Today, as happens every day, Jesus is certainly going to knock at the door eager and expectantly wanting to come in. Will you, be in when he does?

It was visitor's day at the insane asylum and all the inmates were standing in the courtyard and singing *"Ave Maria."*

They were singing it beautifully.

But oddly, each of them was holding a red apple in one hand and tapping it rhythmically with a pencil.

A visitor listened in wonder to the performance and then approached the conductor.

"I am a retired choir director," he said. *"This is one of the best choirs I have ever heard."*

"Yes, I'm very proud of them," said the conductor.

"You should take them on tour," said the visitor, *"what are they called?"*

"Surely that's obvious," replied the conductor...

"They're the Moron Tap-an-apple Choir."