

Here's a text if you've only a minute

Let my prayer come before you, Lord: listen and answer me.
[Entrance Antiphon]

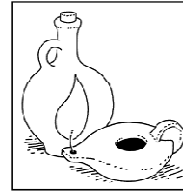
Wisdom is bright and does not grow dim. By those who love her, she is readily seen and found by those who look for her.
[First reading]

O God, you are my God, for you I long...
In the shadow of your wings I rejoice. [Psalm 62]

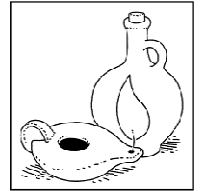
The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him. [The gospel]

Looking towards next week

*What does next week hold for me and how do I feel
God may be calling me?
And so, what do I want to ask of God for myself and
for others?*



32nd Sunday
in Ordinary Time Year A
6th November 2011



Stay Awake!

Opening prayer (2nd version)

Let our prayer rise like incense in the presence of the Lord.

Almighty Father, strong is your justice and great is your mercy. Protect us in the burdens and challenges of life.

**Shield our minds from the distortion of pride
and enfold our desire with the beauty of truth.**

**Help us to become more aware of your loving designs
so that we may more willingly give our lives in service to all.**

As I read this text slowly, I imagine my prayer rising like incense in the presence of the Lord. I picture the smoke floating upwards, I remember its perfume. I let my burdens drift away, confident of my Father's protection.

I pray the text again.
I reflect on God's loving designs for me,
for my family and for the world.

Do I cooperate with him?

I pray for the grace to serve others
in his name.

I speak to the Lord about my need
for his mercy.
I spend time listening to him.



Psalm 62

For you my soul is thirsting, O God, my God.

O God, you are my God, for you I long;
For you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you
Like a dry, weary land without water.

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
To see your strength and your glory
For your love is better than life,
My lips will speak your praise.

So I will bless you all my life,
In your name I shall lift up my hands
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet
My mouth shall praise you with joy.

On my bed I remember you. On you I muse through the night
For you have been my help;
In the shadow of your wings I rejoice.

Today, as I come to pray this psalm, I try to put aside my worries and focus on the special time I am going to spend with the Lord. I read this psalm aloud if I can or softly on my breath perhaps before my own little sanctuary: a cross, a favourite object, a candle.

My attention may be drawn to the joy of the psalmist in his moment of intimacy with the Lord. Do I find myself speaking to him in similar terms? Do I recognise this longing for his love? Then I may want to focus on the parts of my body mentioned here: my lips, my hands, my mouth. They continue to pray even if my mind falls prey to distractions.

When I think of a banquet, what images come to my mind? I speak to the Lord about them.

I rest in the shadow of his wings for as long as I can and then slowly, conclude my prayer with words of thanks and gratitude.

Matthew 25: 1-13

Jesus told this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible; the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps.

The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry. 'The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him.' At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, 'Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out.' But they replied, 'There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and get some for yourselves.' They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. 'Lord, Lord,' they said 'open the door for us.' But he replied. 'I tell you solemnly, I did not know you.' So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.'

Although I may be familiar with this parable, I try to imagine that Jesus is telling it to me today, for the very first time. He gets my attention immediately when he says the story he is about to tell is related to the kingdom of heaven.

I become still, and listen carefully. . .

Jesus tells me about a wedding that is about to take place. He shows me the various types of people involved in this event, describing the different ways they have prepared for such an important occasion.

Jesus highlights how they react when things aren't going according to plan: what they say to each other, how they treat one another.

Finally I hear what the bridegroom had to say to those who were sadly unprepared for his coming.

I may wish to give a moment to consider what this parable means to me today and so examine my reaction to it.

I do this in confidence, safe in the presence of Jesus.

I know I can tell him whatever I am feeling; I can ask him for whatever I need.

I slowly end this time of prayer. Glory be to the Father...