



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 12 November 2023

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, happy Sunday!

Today's Gospel offers us a story regarding the meaning of life of each person. It is the parable of the 10 maidens, called to go out to meet the bridegroom (cf. *Mt* 25:1-13). Living is this: a great preparation for the day when we will be called to go to Jesus! In the parable however, five of the 10 virgins are wise and five are foolish. Let us see what constitutes wisdom and foolishness. Wisdom in life, and foolishness in life.

All those bridesmaids are there to welcome the bridegroom, that is, they want to meet him, just as we too desire a happy fulfilment of life: the difference between wisdom and foolishness is therefore not in goodwill. Nor does it lie in the punctuality with which they arrive at the meeting: they were all there. The difference between the wise and the foolish is another: preparation. The text says: the wise "*took flasks of oil* with their lamps" (v. 4); the foolish, on the other hand, did not. This is the difference: the oil. And what is one of the characteristics of the oil? That it cannot be seen: it is inside the lamps, it is not conspicuous, but without it, the lamps have no light.

Let us look at ourselves, and we will see that our life runs the same risk: many times, we are very careful about our appearance — the important thing is to take good care of one's image and make a good impression in front of others. But Jesus says that the wisdom of life lies elsewhere: in taking care of what cannot be seen but is more important; taking care of the heart. *Nurturing an inner life*. This means knowing how to stop and listen to one's heart, to keep watch over one's own

thoughts and feelings. How often are we unaware of what has happened in our heart on a [given] day? What happens within each one of us? Wisdom means knowing how to make room for silence, in order to be able to listen to ourselves and to others. It means knowing how to give up some of the time spent in front of telephone screens, to look at the light in the eyes of others, in one's own heart, in God's gaze upon us. It means not falling into the trap of activism, but devoting time to the Lord, to listening to his Word.

And the Gospel gives us the right advice so as not to neglect the oil of inner life, the "oil of the soul". It tells us that it is important to *prepare it*. In fact in the story, we see that the maidens already have the lamps, but they have to prepare the oil: they have to go to the sellers, buy it, put it in the lamps... (cf. vv. 7-9). It is the same for us. An inner life cannot be improvised, it is not a matter of a moment, of once in a while, of once and for all. Inner life has to be prepared by dedicating a little time every day, with constancy, as one does for every important thing.

So, we can ask ourselves: what am I preparing at this moment in life? Within myself, what am I preparing? Perhaps I am trying to put aside some savings, I am thinking about a house or a new car, concrete plans... They are good things; they are not bad things. But am I also thinking about dedicating time to the care of the heart, to prayer, to service to others, to the Lord who is the destination of life? In short, how is the oil of my soul? Each one of us, let us ask ourselves this: how is the oil of my soul? Do I nourish it, do I keep it well?

May Our Lady help us to cherish the oil of inner life.

After praying the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, for several months Sudan has been in the throes of a civil war that shows no sign of abating, and which is causing numerous victims, millions of internally displaced people and refugees in neighbouring countries, and a very grave humanitarian situation. I am close to the sufferings of those dear populations of Sudan, and I address a heartfelt appeal to local leaders to facilitate access to humanitarian aid and, with the contribution of the international community, to work in search of peaceful solutions. Let us not forget these brothers and sisters of ours who are in distress!

And every day, my thoughts turn to the very serious situation in Israel and in Palestine. I am close to all those who are suffering, Palestinians and Israelis. I embrace them in this dark moment. And I pray for them a lot. May the weapons be stopped: they will never lead to peace, and may the conflict not widen! Enough! Enough, brothers! Enough! In Gaza, may the wounded be rescued immediately, may civilians be protected, may far more humanitarian aid be allowed to reach that stricken population. May the hostages, among whom there are many elderly people and children,

be freed. Every human being, be they Christian, Jewish, Muslim, of any people or religion, every human being is sacred, precious in the eyes of God, and has the right to live in peace. Let us not lose hope: let us pray and work tirelessly so that the sense of humanity may prevail over hardness of heart.

Two years ago, the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform was launched. I thank those who have joined in this initiative and encourage them to continue on the path of ecological conversion. In this regard, let us pray for the Dubai Climate Change Conference, COP28, which is now close at hand.

Today the Italian Church is celebrating the Day of Thanksgiving on the theme “The cooperative approach to agricultural development”.

I greet you all affectionately, pilgrims from Italy and other parts of the world, especially the priests from the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień, Poland, and the parish groups from Augsburg, Zara, Poreč, Pola, Porto and Paris. I greet the members of the Sant'Egidio Community from countries in Asia, and I encourage them in their commitment to evangelization and promotion. Keep going forward, bravely! And you also help in making peace.

I greet the faithful of Volargne, Ozieri and Cremona. I greet with affection the pilgrimage of Ukrainian faithful and Basilian monks — I can see the Ukrainian flags there — who have come from various countries to celebrate the fourth centenary of the martyrdom of Saint Josaphat. I pray with you for peace in your martyred country. Brothers and sisters, let us not forget martyred Ukraine, let us not forget her.

And I wish you all a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci!