

**Brother can you spare me a dime? Sister can you spare me some oil?**  
*32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in ordinary Time year A*  
*Matthew 25:1-13*

I do not know about you, but I find this parable disturbing.  
We have ten virgins, five of whom forget a little oil for their lamps  
and are rejected from the wedding feast.

(Why does the bridegroom need ten virgins anyway? Is not one bride enough?)  
We have five, otherwise perfectly fine virgins, slammed for forgetting a little oil.  
The other five—with oil, were no more awake when the bridegroom arrived at midnight:  
“They all became drowsy and fell asleep.”

The bridegroom tells the five virgins, “I do not know you.”  
Is that not somewhat excessive?

Of course the bridegroom knows them.

It is not a little oil that makes someone knowable.

There is no need to exaggerate.

Either the bridegroom knows all of them or none of them.

The five “oil-less virgins” are simply poor planners.

And would not our circle of friends would get rather small  
if all the poor planners became complete strangers.

The bridegroom is just upset, and should admit it.

The five virgins had something on their minds  
and he was not the focus of their complete attention.

He is upset that it was not all about him.

Does Jesus get upset when it is not all about him?

Well, actually, yes; but not as one might think,  
that is to say, not in a egotistical and/or spiteful way.

Jesus reveals himself as Bridegroom .

Jesus comes to betroth us to Himself, and He so desires

- to give Himself to all that we are
- to embrace every fiber of who we are

The virgins, by definition, are ready for the encounter, and yet...

Given the nature of love—which cannot tolerate approximation and incompleteness  
—the lack of preparedness and wakefulness on the part of the virgins  
makes them *as though* strangers.

There are no half-measures in love.

True, we fall short, we struggle, we contradict ourselves and we withdraw.

But, if we love, we simply acknowledge it,

and the acknowledgement is itself a beginning of love.

When it comes to God, to Jesus,

we acknowledge it humbly and we continue to thirst for the embrace of the Bridegroom.

The real problem is that the five oil-less virgins took the bridegroom for granted.

“Open the door to us.”

There was no “Sorry”, no apology.

There is no taking love for granted.

To do so is to become “unrecognizable” to love.

Jesus speaks from the depths and the grandeur and the sensitivity of love.

The questions then are:

- How awake are we in our hearts?
- Do we hunger and thirst for Christ?
- Are we ready for the Second Coming?

When we realize how much and how personally we are loved and that—as saint Teresa of Avila says (+1582), “Love calls for love in return.”, we can be overwhelmed.

How can we return love for so much love?

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (+1153) asks the question,

“Is all this to wilt because we cannot be equal in love with Him who is love?”

Saint Bernard answers the question with another question,

“Are we to doubt that the soul is loved by the Word, God, first and with a greater love?”

John tells us in his first epistle (4:10),

“In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he has loved us.”

God so loves us that He indwells us by the Holy Spirit.

God the Spirit indwells us, He who—as Saint Paul says (Romans 8:26),

“comes to the aid of our weakness”, which, paraphrased, could easily read,

“comes to the aid of our limited ability to love, to return love to Him who is love.”

Our days should be punctuated with supplication to the Holy Spirit:

“Come Holy Spirit.”

“Come Holy Spirit, the Comforter, Ray of heavenly light, Spiritual Unction  
enkindle in me the fire of your love.”