WELCOME TO ST. JOSEPH – ST. LAWRENCE PARISH

'Two Churches. One Parish"

Growing as Disciples of Jesus; Making Disciples for Jesus Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time - November 8, 2020

St. Joseph of the Valley: 31151 207th Street, (Rural) Leavenworth, KS 66048 St. Lawrence: 211 West Riley, Easton, KS 66020 Parish Mailing Address: P.O. Box 129, Easton, KS 66020

Father Francis Bakyor, Pastor

Easton Rectory Phone: 913-773-5712

Father's cell: 913-235-6837

Father's Email: francis.bakyor@yahoo.com

Website: www.sjslparish.org

St. Joseph of the Valley Hall: 913-758-9225 St. Lawrence Hall & Fax: 913-773-8401 "LIKE" us on Facebook for new announcements

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE:				
TUES	Nov. 10	06:00 pm	STL	World Peace
Adoration will follow Mass until 7:30 p.m CANCELLED				
THUR	Nov. 12	06:00 pm	SJV	Parishioners of SJ-SL
SAT	Nov. 14	05:00 pm	SJV	Donald Ernzen &
SUN	Nov. 15	09:00 am	STL	Pete Gwartney ₽
Confessions: SAT-4:30 pm at SJV; SUN-8:30 at STL				

PLEASE NOTE:

Attendance for Masses - limited to 25% of the building's seating capacity— 30-75 at St. Lawrence and 30-45 at St. Joseph of the Valley. We will be offering four Masses per week. Please do not feel obligated to attend weekend Masses — weekday Masses will work just fine if it fits into your family's schedule. You may sign-up for Masses online at

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040A4AA9AB2AA1FA7stjosephst. Please see online info for restrictions and guidance.

Please pray for the sick, especially: Phil Bell, Susie Beying, Jennifer Brushwood, Carl Davidson, George Dean, Carolyn DeMaranville, Vince Eimer, Tom Flack, Tina Gaspard, Ronnie Gast, Alan Halstead, Marly Heim, Frank Heintzelman, Jim Heintzelman, Lydia Heintzelman, Melanie Herken, Jon Highfill, Trista Highfill, Mark Hund, Arlene Jennings, Wendi Johnston, Michael Jones, Elmer Karczewski, Phillip Leon, Kelly Long, Joyce Lowe, Mary Meinert, Jeni Mettelstedt, Don Navinsky, Kay Nocktonick, Dannie Phillips, Adam Pineau, Mike Pursel, Mary M. Ruhlman, Kim Sachse, Tanner Siebenmorgen, Julie Simonis, Jim (Poly) Sloan, Gary Stafford, Aaron Welch, Louise Wistuba and Nick Yuska.

Prayer List for Our Soldiers: ARMY: 1LT Daniel Broaddus, Pvt. David Crook, Lexi (Skaggs) Hargis, Major Bryan Herken, SPC Derrick Hunt, SGT Colby Seifert, William Stradley. AIRFORCE: E-4 Robert W. Herken, TSGT Scott Loecher, E-3 Connor Schuler, A1C Noah Tattershall. NAVY: ADDA Jason P. Herken, YNS1 (SS) Kevin ADDA Jason P. Herken, YNS1 (SS) Kevin Lansing.

Prayer for Vocations: Brother Seelos (Tyler Lunsford).

OUR PARISH NEWS

COLLECTION: Thank you for your gifts to our parish! Collections received was \$1,320, including \$30 for utilities and \$20 for SJV Cemetery. Last week's on-line collection was \$254.23. Thank you for your generosity.

<u>VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY</u>: We are soliciting volunteers who would like to serve as our Parish Director of Religious Education (DRE), leading the effort to teach our children about their Catholic faith. The DRE performs a number of crucial functions: coordinating CCD enrollment and the necessary paperwork, developing the CCD calendar, recruiting and assisting teachers and other volunteers, working with the Archdiocese and teachers in curriculum development and resource procurement, communicating with parents and the parish council, and ensuring all teachers are Virtus trained. Please prayerfully consider this incredibly fulfilling role within our parish. We are also open to co-DREs if that is an approach that works for you. The parish council does not anticipate starting CCD classes before October, allowing the new DRE time to prepare. If you are interested please contact: Jason Nichols, phone: 913-683-2661 or email: inichols@dfamilk.com_OR Sharon Wagner, phone: 913-683-4495 or email: w5cattle@aol.com.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: We are searching for a volunteer to clean the rectory twice a month. POC is Sharon Wagner, phone: 913-683-4495 or email: w5cattle@aol.com.

TOOTSIE ROLL DRIVE: The Knights of Columbus would like to thank you for your support of their Annual Tootsie Roll Drive.

OUR CCD PROGRAM: Now that we've navigated the start of the school year amid the pandemic, St. Joseph-St. Lawrence parish is ready to resume religious education for our children. We will begin with eighth grade students preparing for Confirmation. Class for eighthgraders will began on Sunday, <u>November 1st</u>. Class will be held at St. Lawrence Hall following 9 a.m. Mass (10:00 -11:30 a.m.).

The next step is a plan for the remainder of the classes (1st -7th). Those classes are projected to start November 15th. There are many items that need to be worked between now and the first day of class. First and foremost, we need to know how many students by grade plan to attend. Once we have those numbers we will know how many teachers are still needed and establish a schedule that allows for a safe environment. All classes will be held at St. Lawrence Hall following 9 a.m. Mass. However, how frequent classes meet is dependent on the number of students. Please be assured that the council will do our best to put in place precautions to provide social distancing and a clean/safe environment.

There will be CCD sign up after the 9:00am Mass on Sunday, November 8th. Parish council hopes to have classes and teachers in place to start class on November 15th. Contact: Jason Nichols -913.683.2661, EMAIL jnichols@dfamilk.com . Sharon Wagner 913.683.4495, EMAIL: W5cattle@aol.com.

OTHER NEWS IN OUR ARCHDIOCESE



SAVING HUMAN LIVES: This Article is in regard to a 1998 comic strip, B.C. Two little ants sitting on a rock by the ocean see the Statue of Liberty in the distance. One says, "That statue in the harbor-didn't it used to have a light?" The other one says, "Yes." The first one replies, "When did it go out?" Then the second one says, "1973." The trial of Roe vs. Wade that made abortion legal was 1973. Not only did America's light go out but our heart and our conscience died that day also. We should hang our heads in shame for having allowed this atrocity to happen.

For a country to make legal the killing of our very own children - flesh and blood – is a country without morals, without pride, without conscience – a country headed for its own destruction. We're not talking about saving whales, or eagles, or the spotted owls here. We're trying to save human lives. We as a nation have conditioned our minds with so-called "reasons" and "excuses" and "choices." They are just smoke screens to hide our sins behind. Let's call abortion what it really is -- murder -- a sin against God's Fifth Commandment. Our day of reckoning is coming.

STEWARDSHIP: "Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour." (Matthew 25:13)

Many of us have put off doing something because we think we are too busy. We've all said, "I'll do it later when I have time." Unfortunately, too many of us apply this attitude to our Faith. Jesus' call is urgent, in the here and now, in your current circumstances. Don't delay. How is God calling you to use your gifts today? None of us is guaranteed tomorrow.

XAVIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL remembers and celebrates their founder, Mother Xavier Ross, and the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth during the week of November 8-14. In Mother Xavier's words, "Look for the good that is yet to be." Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

XAVIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL is looking for substitute teachers for the Fall semester and part-time teachers in extended care. If you are interested in working with talented children and staff at our Xavier K - 8 campus or at our extended care program please contact the school office at 913-682-3135.

NOVEMBER 21ST EVENT FOR ALL TEENS AND ADULTS The Rural Catholic Youth Conference has been moved to February 20-21,

2021, and we are hosting these northern and southern region events for all adults and teens (targeted for high school aged; junior high welcome) on **November 21, 2020**. Please join Sister Mary Elizabeth Albers, SOLT and RYMO for a morning or evening to Enflame Your Heart. We know you were created For Such a Time as This (RCYC Theme). Let us each embrace our own belovedness, so that we may share the Lord's love with others in our homes and communities. For more info, see flyer attached below.

ADVENT SILENT RETREAT WITH ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST: Christ's Peace House of Prayer will offer this special retreat from **December 4** at 5:30pm-**December 6** at 4:30pm. Come, prepare your hearts for the coming of the Lord this Advent as we look to St. John the Baptist to show us how to prepare the way. This will be a silent retreat. There will be conferences, Eucharistic Adoration, Mass, Confession and time for private prayer, reflection and walking. Cabins/Courtyard Rooms: \$170 Single/\$250 Couple or Single Guest Rooms: \$100 (Meals Included). To attend, send an email to: info@christspeace.com or call 913.773.8255.

CYO BASKETBALL REGISTRATION IS OPEN!: Regular Registration through **Nov 13**. Program Duration Mon Nov 2-Sat Mar 6. Tournament for 5th-8th Grades Feb 25–Mar 6. Games TH/F/Sat Basketball tryouts/practices can begin Nov 2. Basketball Games Start Dec 3. To register, please reach out to the CYO office for placement with another parish - admin@cyojwa.org. For more information on practice times, uniforms and any other parish specific questions please reach out directly to your parish's Director of Sports Ministry.

PLEASE - There are a large number of other Archdiocesan announcements that could not fit in the space available. They will be posted on our church website listed above as a 2nd page to this bulletin.

Bulletin Items: Contact Kim Sachse, 913-775-0690 Or Email <u>Sislparish@Gmail.Com</u>. Mass intentions may be scheduled with Kim as well. MUST SUBMIT BY 9 pm TUES FOR INCLUSION.

WELCOME TO ST. JOSEPH - ST. LAWRENCE PARISH "Two Churches, One Parish" Growing as Disciples of Jesus; Making Disciples for Jesus Nov. 8, 2020

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UPCOMING RETREATS AT CHRIST'S PEACE HOUSE OF PRAYER:

Save the date(s)!

Dec. 4th

6th, Advent Silent Dec. Retreat. Retreat https://www.archkck.org/cpp/christs-peace-house-of-prayercalendar?cid=38&ceid=3378&cerid=0&cdt=12%2f4%2f2020

Jan. 8th - 10th, 2021: Spiritual Reflection & Planning Retreat. Retreat https://www.archkck.org/cpp/christs-peace-house-of-prayercalendar?cid=38&ceid=3377&cerid=0&cdt=1%2f8%2f2021 For more information, contact info@christspeace.com or 913-773-8255.

MARCH FOR LIFE & TEENS ENCOUNTER CHRIST

We made the difficult decision not to take a delegation to March for Life in January in DC. But this opens up the possibility for teens to attend the Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) retreat. We will provide a small group retreat experience for high schoolers **on January 16-18, 2021** at Prairie Star Ranch (PSR). We will be following social distancing and other safety procedures that allowed Camp Tekakwitha to happen. TEC is a 3-day retreat based on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. TEC involves 16 and older adolescents encountering Christ in a way that many have never experienced before. On a TEC retreat, you will have the opportunity to grow in your relationship with Christ through talks, group discussion, individual reflection, prayer, and sharing in the Sacraments. The weekend retreats are led by a team of youth, adults and a priest as spiritual director. To sign up go to: www.sunflowertec.org

THE RELIGIOUS ALLIANCE AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY (RAAP) is providing a national webinar entitled "Winning The Battle, Helping Pastors, Youth Ministers and Parents Find Victory Over Pornography For Teens And Young Adults" on November 10th at 11:00 am CST (12:00 pm EST). This webinar will present practical steps that can be taken to help youth and young adults face the reality of our pornified culture and have victory. For more info, see the flier attached below.

REKINDLING THE LIGHT: Spiritual Refreshment for Caregivers in the Holiday Season Hosted by the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas and The National Catholic Partnership on Disability with Catholic Author and Speaker Maureen Pratt. Throughout this unprecedented year, caregivers have tirelessly and selflessly shown their love in grand ways and small. As 2020 nears an end, one more potentially tall hurdle remains: The holidays! Full of profound faith and spiritual meaning and additional events and activities, the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Years can be especially challenging, stressful, and draining for caregivers. It can also be a time of isolation and loneliness. Rekindle the Light will provide a virtual half-day of spiritual refreshment for caregivers of all kinds. Rekindle the will be held live online on Saturday November 14, 2020, from 12:30 to 4:30 PM CST. For registration and agenda, go to www.archkck.org/special-needs. For more information, contact Tom Racunas at tracunas@archkck.org or call 913.647.3054.

<u>PROJECT CHRYSALIS MASS</u> November 30. You are cordially invited to join us for the Project Chrysalis Metro Mass for those who have lost children or grandchildren. Church of the Ascension, Monday, November 30th, 7:00 p.m. (This Mass is open to all in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas and the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph). If you would like to celebrate with us and wish to reserve a memory candle, please RSVP no later than Monday November 23 to Patty (pbillinger@kcascension.org or 913-681 3348) Information needed: correct spelling of the name of the deceased, your relationship, your name, and whether you plan to be present



PRAYER FROM POPE FRANCIS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need. We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us. He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

"THE HISTORY & LEGACY OF IMMACULATA HIGH SCHOOL" is now available for purchase from the publisher, Lulu.com. Access the link to order from Facebook pages "Forever Raiders", "Immaculata High School Alumni" or "The History & Legacy of Immaculata High School". Direct link is:

http://www.lulu.com/shop/mary-ann-sachse-brown-and-marti-sachse judson/the-history-legacy-of-immaculata-catholic-high-school-in-the-first-city-of-kansas/hardcover/product-24157407.html This is a keepsake hardcover 120 page book with nearly 300 images. Available in color (best quality) or black and

NEW FOSTER CARE WEBSITE: You can make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children in Kansas! Sadly, every day in Kansas, children are removed vulnerable children in Kansas! Sadly, every day in Kansas, children are removed from their homes by no fault of their own for a variety of reasons. Each of these children is a precious, unique gift from God who deserves a loving and safe environment where he or she can THRIVE! Because care of the orphan and works of mercy are part of the mission for all baptized Catholics, the Church is the solution to an overwhelmed Kansas foster system which is facing increased needs due to COVID-19.

Please visit the new Archdiocesan Foster Care Ministry Website at www.archkcks.com/foster to learn how you can help vulnerable children in our

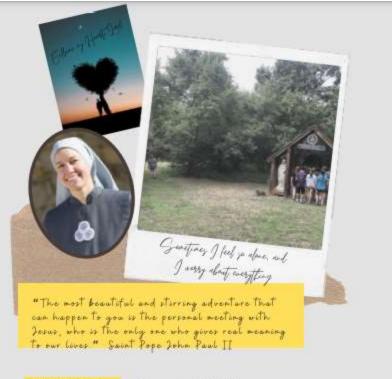
community and support the families who have answered the call to love and protect these children. If you are currently fostering or have adopted your child/ren from foster care, we want to connect with you to support you on your journey! Please join the Archdiocesan Foster Family by registering here: www.archkck.org/fostercaredatabase

NEW END-OF-LIFE RESOURCE GUIDE IS NOW AVAILABLE

The Ethics Council that serves Archbishop Naumann has produced a comprehensive resource for end-of-life planning titled "Catholic Guide For-End-Of Life and Establishing of Advance Directives". The purpose of the guide is to assist the faithful in making wise decisions about complex treatments in grave illness or as life's end approaches in accordance with the teachings of our Catholic faith. It also includes two Appendices for a Durable Power of Attorney and an Advance Directive form. For a free digital copy of the Guide, visit www.archkck.org/prolife-end-of-life-care

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM - ADULT TRAINING (VIRTUS) Effective Immediately In light of the current health conditions, one prudent and preventative measure we are taking is to make the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children for Adults training available Online as an option. Effective immediately due to COVID-19, the Archdiocesan requirement for attending a VIRTUS Protecting God's Children for Adults workshop live session will be suspended and the option of the online version of the module can be offered in lieu of live training. This is a temporary safety precaution, and parishes may still offer the live training session available as an option if they prefer as long as the local county and state ordinances in effect at the time of the event are followed. Please note, the training must still be completed prior to participants working around youth, but the requirement may now temporarily be met by completing the online Protecting God's Children module. Individuals needing to attend a session will be offered the option of the online module at the time of registration. They will still need to follow the background screening and policy completion process at the time of registration. Individuals who are already currently registered for an upcoming live session, may log back into their account and change to the online module. These procedures will be reviewed and updated periodically as needed and are in place to protect you, those you work with, and your family. Please stay safe and healthy and continue to pray for all our brothers and sisters in Christ! We are praying for all of you and your families. If you have questions, please contact Sandy Vielhauer at svielhauer@archkck.org or Jenifer Valenti at jvalenti@archkck.org. May God bless you and keep you safe.

PLANNED GIVING BRIEF: Our Catholic Church has spanned the centuries and the globe and through all previous pandemics and disasters has been a source of charity to all through its parish priests and religious. We invite you to make a grateful response to God for these gifts by planning a deferred gift to your parish. Visit CatholicPlannedGiving.org to learn how to accept this invitation.



WHEN: November 21, 2020

WHERE:
St. Leo Parish Center, Horton KS
9-11:30 am
or
Southern Region Location TBA
Saturday late afternoon / evening

WHAT:

Gather!! (safely spaced) Inspiration from Sr. Mary Elizabeth Albers. SOLT Prayer, snacks. & free resources

THESE GATHERINGS FOR ADULTS AND TEENS WILL LEAD US INTO RCYC WHICH HAS BEEN MOVED TO FEB 20-21, 2021. FREE WILL DONATIONS ACCEPTED NO RSVP NEEDED







@ruralyouthkch www.archkch.org/rural-outreach ruralyouth@archkck.org



WINNING THE

November 10, 2020 - NOON EST - Register



This live free websits will present the reality of the pornography problem among teens and young adults within the faith community, its adultion, we will present practical steps that faith community leaders can take to help those under their cars. Our focus will be on those who are helping tivers and young adults. Each presenter will share a real story of someone who has faced the challenge and found victory. We will cover a broad array of topics including:

- OF THE PROBLEM
- TECHNOLOGY-ITS BLESSINGS AND CHALLENGES

- MESSAGES
- VICTORY IS NOT ABOUT DO'S
 AND DON'TS BUT ABOUT THE
 SPIRITUAL BATTLE
 THE ROLE OF PRAYER AND
 SCRIPTURE
 SPANN SCRIPTURE
 READN SCRIPTURE
 READN SCRIPTURE
- THE MESSAGES OF SPIRITUAL BATTLE BAARTS OF PORNOGRAPHY ABOUT SEX, ACCOUNTABILITY THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL INTIMACY AND MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT VICTORY FOR LEADERS

 IT IS NOT YOUR DAD'S PLAYBOY GROUPS
- THE SCOPE AND SERIOUSNESS GOD'S BETTER STORY AND THE POWER OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

The pornography of today is far more violent and damaging than what most adults understand. Unfortunately, we need to assume tor risk of

Few parents or faith leaders ever address the heastly of luman sensitive and the dangers by, they typically do not

hearty. Our challenge is to tall his story with grace, forgiveness and power. Parents seed to be empowered in their ability to speak to their children and be provided with the curriculum and toxis to keep their twens and young people safe.

victory. Energone who Estana will be encouraged and given bone.

FREE ONE-HOUR LIVE

- AT NOON EST --

NOVEMBER 10, 2020

Registration: bit.ly/winning-the-battle **WEBINAR PRESENTERS**



Rob Stoddard



Kevin Bohli



Josh Martin



I began my day with Sunday Mass, but this is also a special day because it is All Saints' Day. Each year on this Holy Day I feel a sense of wonder and awe as I pray to those saints who have attained the beatific vision in Heaven. They have been called to the ultimate union with God.

For the past 14 years, my calling has been to provide for the Archdiocese of Kansas in Kansas City. I am grateful for the opportunity to support Archbishop Naumann and the ministries of the Archdiocese.

Many of you are so supportive of the Archdiocese and recently I have received a few phone calls from you asking about the tax law changes in 2020. Personally, I did not know we were allowed to even start *thinking* about taxes until December 31st, and then again on April 14th. So, I applaud all of our supporters who are thinking ahead.

In light of those conversations, I want to take a moment and summarize a few of the tax changes that will benefit you in 2020.

Note – I am not an attorney or a financial advisor, but I love helping to connect generous people like you with important causes and ministries and programs that make a difference.

Here's what I know, and what many of our donors are doing to take advantage of this year's tax changes.

Why is this year different?

Congress passed legislation to help families and businesses after the coronavirus marched the U.S. economy off a cliff in March. Lots of different things were included in the CARES act legislation, including some one-time changes to tax law that make it more advantageous to donate this year than in previous years.

What are the key changes?

I'm glad you asked! Read on...

For everyone: \$300 tax deduction

Back in 2017, Congress significantly increased the standard deduction families can take on their taxes. As a result, many taxpayers no longer itemize their deductions. That means they don't receive any direct federal benefit for their generous charitable giving. This year, Congress added back in a \$300 charitable tax deduction for each tax return taking the standard deduction. So, if you make a \$300 cash donation this year to a qualifying charity, you'll reduce your taxes. And, of course, your donation will help the charity and the people it serves.

Want to use your \$300 and make an impact?

Consider supporting the Archbishop's Call to Share annual appeal, which funds priorities such as: advancing social ministries, empowering parish communities and cultivating Catholic leadership.

For our most generous supporters and potentially older donors: No more 60% AGI Limitation for Cash Contributions

The biggest benefit this year helps our most generous supporters and our older donors. Here's how it works.

In the past, a donor could be very generous and give away the majority of their taxable income. He or she could then deduct cash gifts up to 60% of his/her adjusted gross income (AGI). For this year only, donors can deduct cash gifts up to 100% of their AGI.

So, for example, consider a donor who has \$1 million of AGI for 2020 and would like to make a \$3 million cash gift split evenly between Catholic schools, his or her parish and seminarian education. In prior years the donor's deduction would be limited to \$600,000 (60% of AGI). For this year only, the CARES Act allows a charitable contribution deduction of \$1 million (100% of the donor's AGI). Plus, the donor would still have a \$2 million charitable deduction he or she could carry forward (subject to the old 60% of AGI limit) in the next five tax years.

This change in the tax law is extremely beneficial to donors who are considering making large gifts in the next few years as well as some of our older donors who have annual income, but don't need it because they rely on other sources for their living expenses.

As always, please consult your own financial advisors before making any decisions.

Thank you for making a real, lasting impact with your giving.

Your sister in Christ,

Lesle M. Knop, MS, CFRE, CERF
Division Secretary, Stewardship and Giving
Executive Director
Office of Stewardship and Development
Catholic Foundation of Northeast Kansas
Catholic Fine Arts Council
Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
12615 Parallel Parkway
Kansas City, Kansas
(913) 647-0325
www.archkck.org

32nd Sunday of Ordinary time, Year A (11/8/2020)

Texts: Wisdom 6:12-16

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

Theme: Be alert and ready at all times.

Congregation:St. Joseph of the Valley-St. Lawrence Parish, Easton/ Kansas.

Dear friends and brothers and sisters in Christ, Warm greetings again to you all. I hope you are all adjusting to the stress of the Election time. We continue to pray for peaceful transition of the New Government. The lord has thrown his invite to us again to listen to his word and be fed with the Eucharist, the gift of his own Body and Blood, the food for our spiritual journey. The lord warns us to be always alert and ready anytime he comes.

How many of you ever run out of gas? In most audience, this would be nearly everyone. I cannot give any statistics on this, but it would appear that every year at least half million people call for help because they have run out of gas.

Besides flat tires, dead batteries, and misplaced keys, running out of gas ranks up there why people call for roadside services. One might understand this happening a generation ago, when gas gauges were not entirely accurate, and when all the warning lights of one day were non-existent.

But now we have warning messages that our fuel is running low (giving us perhaps an hour driving) and then additional progressively urgent warning indicating just how many estimated miles of driving is we have left. One must say that most people who run out of fuel are — "without excuse"

Why the do we do it, seemingly as often as today as people did years ago, when all of the advantages of technology were not available? We'll come back to this question at the end of our message. In our text, it is not gasoline that is lacking, but olive oil "the fuel burned in the lamps of Jesus' day. And I believe we will discover that the five foolish virgins did not really "run out" of oil; they never had it.

In today's passage from Matthew, Jesus tell a parable partially an allegory, about something which would be very familiar to his Palestinian readers- a village marriage. Apparently ten girls would be asked to accompany the bride as she awaited the arrival of the bridegroom. The problem was that the had no when the bridegroom would turn up and, when it got dark, they would need to have lighted lamps. If the bride's companions were caught unaware, if they were not around when the bridegroom came, they would be locked out or left behind.

Imagery drawn from marriage was a traditional way to describe the relationship between God and his people. When asked by the disciples, like those of john the Baptist, did not fast, Jesus replied: "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? (Mt.9:15). A few weeks back, on the 28th Sunday, we saw Jesus tell the parable of the guests invited to the marriage feast of a father's son.

The ten virgins represent the disciples of Jesus, as the await his coming. On the basis of what happened later on, five are described as wise or sensible and five as foolish. Their wisdom here consists in their taking prudent steps to do what the need to do in order to come to face to face with their Lord.

However, the bridegroom is long in coming. The early expectation of the Second Coming has not been realized. All- both the sensible ones who brought sufficient supply of oil as well as those who did not — "grow drowsy and fall asleep. Thus, it seems that being fully awake at every single moment is not the point but rather the overall readiness when the time comes to respond.

Then, right in the middle of the night, the cry goes up "the bridegroom is here" our god is a God of surprises. You never know how or when he is going to appear. For some, it is a long- awaited and long desire announcement; for others, it creates alarm. For those well stock with the oil of loving service to their brothers and sisters, the cry is one that fills them with joy and anticipation. One think of Paul saying, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain, which should I choose I cannot tell. I am pressed between the two. My desire is to die and to be with Christ, for that is far better" (Phil.1:21-23).

For those who have squandered the gifts the have been given, the announcement fills them with dread. We might feel that the wise virgins were rather selfish in refusing to share their oil with the "foolish" in such a critical situation. However, the parables of Jesus normally are making one point taken from some common experience of daily life. The focus is on that one point and other details are part of it.

The closed door means that access to Jesus is not automatic or to be altogether take for granted. And that is precisely the warning in today's readings. "I do not know you" The foolish virgins eventually get back with their necessary supplies of oil and find the door shut in their face." Lord, Lord, open the door for us." In reply, they hear the most terrible words god could speak to us: "I am sorry, I do not know who you are. I invited you to be part of my wedding but you have never been with me. You have been asleep or you have been going your own way."

In an emergency there are some things we can borrow from others at a short notice. But to be ready to meet Jesus, to have fully accepted his Gospel vision as part of our life, to walk hand in hand with him is not something we can suddenly wake up to and say, "Give it to me now!" by then it is just too late. Let us pray, then, today for that wisdom which knows where the real secrets of life and success are.

The First Reading tells us to be constantly on the watch of Lady Wisdom. "Watch for her early and you will have no trouble; you will find her sitting at your gates." Not only that, "she herself walks about looking for those who are worthy of her and graciously shows herself to them as the go, in every thought of theirs coming to meet them"

The truly wise person is the one who has not waited until "some time in the future" to make Jesus fully part of life. For quite a number of Christians it seems that setting up a carrier and making money are more important priorities than making the gospel a major part of their lives. It is a risky investment. If there ever was a blue chip for life, it is Jesus and the way of life he offers us in the gospel. So many pass it up. The are indeed foolish virgins. The truly wise person builds his life on Jesus as the way, on Jesus as the Truth and Life, not only for the future but for here and now. The Gospel, understood and adapted is the only program that can guarantee fulfilment and happiness right away. The others all depend on an uncertain future.

Such a wise person 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 takes place, in the situations I which they meet, in situations in which they fid themselves. Jesus is no stranger to them. He

can bring many surprises but he is never unexpected. When they eventually hear the final call, "Get up! the master is coming!", they are not worried. The are happy and more than ready to meet an old friend face to face. It is not the question of taking a gamble on making a last-minute confession on your deathbed. A surprising number of people do not die in their beds. It is a question rather of what I plan to do this very day and every day. There is absolutely no better way to prepare for the final call than, first, to put it completely out of one's head, and second, to learn to spend each and every day in the company of Jesus. "I am with you always"

There is are two short prayers which we may find useful to be said at any time as we go through our day: "Lord, grant that all my thoughts, intentions, actions and responses may be directed solely to your love and service this day"

"Help me, lord, to seek, to find, and to respond to you in every person and every experience of this day."

If these prayers really reflect the fabric of my daily living, then let the bridegroom come when he will-I am ready. Instead of knocking at his door, I will find that he comes to knock at mine. "I [Jesus] stand at your door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come to him to eat with him, and he with me" (Rev.3:20). Today he is certainly going to knock at my door. Will I be in when he comes?

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