

SAINT MARY STAR OF THE SEA, LARGS OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR, MILLPORT

32nd ORDINARY SUNDAY
8 NOVEMBER 2020

Readings



“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 do not know you.’
So stay awake, because you do not know
either the day or the hour.”

(Matthew 25:10-13)

TO PREPARE FOR DEATH IS TO PREPARE FOR LIFE

The unavoidable reality of death is one of the great questions which every person must face, sooner or later. Even for those who live in denial, it is the proverbial great elephant in the room. Because everything in us recoils at the proposal of death (itself the expression of the survival instinct in us or, more spiritually, of the fact that God created us to live, not to die) it is utterly understandable that we would want to put it out of our minds, avoid talking about it and change the subject if death is brought up.

But the fact remains that death must be faced. There is a whole strain of philosophical wisdom which admonishes us to remember death, every day (“memento mori”). Psychologically, it is healthier to consider death and talk about it in the appropriate way even to children when they begin to ask about it. It is, however, only Jesus Christ who provides the solution or answer to the question of death in a way which quashes all of the most human fears about death. For, by literally being born in order to do duel with death, he has taken control of it. There is no longer any reason to fear death. As Jesus holds our lives in his hands, so he holds our deaths. No other power of whatever nature can ever claim any dominion over death. Death is now at the service of Love.

The reason this is now the incontrovertible truth is because Jesus rose from the dead. This is the most significant fact of human history and of the history of creation. In fact, it is the beginning of the new creation and the new humanity. The glorious, wonderful and consoling point of it for us mortals is that Jesus wants us to share in it. The fears which death dangles in front of us are actually now powerless. They are counterfeit. The fear of imploding into annihilation, the fear of being the slave of some dark and evil power, the fear of being forgotten, the fear of never again seeing those we have loved and who have loved us, the fear that therefore this very life we now live is meaningless because death will render it meaningless: every single one of these fears, and any others you can imagine, is now absolutely devoid of reason. They have all vanished in Jesus.

Death no longer means an end to life, or casts a spell of meaninglessness over this life. Now, in Jesus, death spells precisely the opposite: that this life has lasting meaning, that this life is the seedbed of life after death. In other words, in Jesus, death means that this life prepares us for eternal life. Keeping the deathless Jesus in our minds, we mindfully live this life until death opens it out and up into the life of Resurrection. Thus, to prepare for death means to live this life in function of eternal life. Death is no longer our master, but our servant. It serves to make us live this life in the wisdom of eternity.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them; to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

Responsorial Psalm 62(63):2-8

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

Gospel

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 buy 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 do not know you.” So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer

The History of Salvation

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For by his birth he brought renewal to humanity’s fallen state,
and by his suffering, cancelled out our sins;
by his rising from the dead he has opened the way to eternal life,
and by ascending to you, O Father, he has unlocked the gates of
heaven...

Communion Antiphon

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose,
near restful waters he leads me.

In the midst of life we are in death.
To whom may we look for help, but from you, Lord,
who for our sins are justly displeased?

Yet, Lord God most holy, Lord most mighty,
holy and most merciful Saviour,
deliver us from the bitter pains of eternal death.

(Notker the Stammerer, Battle Song, 912 AD)