



CSA COMMITMENT WEEKEND HOMILY IN PEW WEEKEND: NOVEMBER 7- 8, 2020



The parable of the wise virgins in today's Gospel concerns readiness for the coming of Christ. That Christ will come again is a certainty of our faith that we profess in the Creed every Sunday, "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." We also acclaim this faith in prayer after the consecration of the Eucharist, "We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your resurrection, until you come again." The coming of Christ is a future reality, and for that time we must always be ready. But it would be a tragedy to have our eyes only on the future because we would miss His coming in the present. We would miss all the ways He wants to bless us here and now.

Here and now, even in the midst of this pandemic, God wants to bless us. He wants to come to us. He wants us to know His life and to experience His rest. In this more quiet but daily coming of our Lord, there may not be the voice of an archangel or the trumpet of God that St. Paul described in the second reading, but the fruits are no less real: peace, joy, and love. Today, the wise virgins are those who can see that this pandemic is no obstacle to God's desire to bless us, those who make themselves ready to go out and meet Him. Today, we can be those wise virgins.

Today, throughout the diocese, our Bishop is making an appeal to each one of us. He is asking for our prayerful and financial support of the Church's ministry, and we can be like those wise virgins by seeing this appeal for what it truly is: an opportunity for blessing.

We read in the Acts the Apostles, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." In the prayer of St. Francis, we know that it is in giving that we receive. And Jesus promises in the Gospel of Matthew, "everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more." The blessing of life and rest that Jesus comes to give us is not in acquiring more for ourselves, but in giving ourselves through love. That is the paradoxical truth that the wise can see, and that is the opportunity for blessing that we have today.

Bishop Vasquez, through the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA), is asking us to give. In the midst of this pandemic, the Catholic Church in central Texas has continued to serve the poor, share the faith, and offer the sacraments. Today, our bishop is asking us to give to this mission, to help it remain.

The CSA supports the education of seminarians who are in formation to be ordained priests. This past June, we received the gift of five new priests who are now offering the gift of the Eucharist to thousands. We also received the gift of twelve new seminarians, which makes a total of thirty-three men who have generously given the gift of their lives so that we might receive the gift of the sacraments. Through our gift today, they will continue to study for the priesthood..

The CSA also supports charitable works for life and justice, youth and young adult ministries, as well as Catholic schools. Through our generous gift today, these great works will remain fruitful.

But not only will the ministries of the diocese remain through our gifts, Jesus also promises that through our giving He will remain. John 15 - "Remain in me, as I remain in you... If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love... I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another."

The Catholic Services Appeal is an opportunity for us to receive God's blessing, an invitation to allow the Lord to remain in each one of us - not by acquiring more for ourselves but in giving ourselves in

love. It is well known that God is love, but the wise also see the paradoxical blessing that comes from this truth. The wise also see that because God is love, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Because God is love, it is in giving that we receive. Because God is love, we will receive a hundred times more than what we give.

Friends, God is never outdone in generosity. Let's be like the wise virgins in today's Gospel. He has come to us in the form of this appeal. Let's go out to meet Him with lamps full of the oil of generosity.