

In my early days in Melbourne driving aroundⁱ, I remember hiring one of the seminary cars we had to pay some money for the day to get the car and, you know, fill the tank. And on this day, I remember the seminarian who handed the key to me said, it's running empty, so you better fill it. I said, yeah, I will. And I thought it had enough to get me to the place because I was in a hurry. I thought I would fill it up on my way back. Little did I know that the guy before me had virtually emptied the tank.

I was stuck on the highway and that was my first experience being stuck on the highway. To make things worse, my battery was running low on my phone. I remember being stuck in that place. Luckily, I was able to make a call to the seminary and they organized somebody to come, you know, one of those RACV people, to come and help me out. But in those moments of waiting there, I recollected what the other seminarian had told me. The tank is empty. If you are starting this journey, you better fill up this tank. But yet I chose to run that car on an empty tank. You can't. Cars do not run on empty tanks.

In the first reading wisdom is the theme. Wisdom consists, not so much in knowing what to do in the ultimate, as in knowing what to do next. We hear in the first reading again, wisdom personified as a mysterious woman, who is never far from those who seek for her. Lady wisdom is near. She lingers at people's Gates and doors, and she waits to be consulted on all manners of things. She walks about looking for those who are worthy of her. She's portrayed not as a rare and elusive being, but as a resource within everyone's reach, a resource within everyone's reach.

So, let's go to the story of the gospel today. The 10 bridesmaids. The five who had reserves of oil and the five who thought they were okay with what they had. In that story, we see that all of them are waiting for somebody, the bridegroom. Interestingly, the bridegroom is late here. In most of the weddings that I have done, it was the brides, but it was actually kind of planned to make it look good. When the bridegroom fails to make his expected appearance, the bridesmaids, weary with waiting, doze off to sleep. And when, at midnight, there was a cry that the bride groom was coming, everybody is not trimming the, the lamp, but the wedding party is minus five bridesmaids. The wisdom of the five wise bridesmaids consisted in doing what was expected of them in being prepared for the arrival of the bride groom. Their wisdom wasn't extraordinary. It was simple, common sense. The message of the gospel, therefore, is very simple today. If we do what we have to, if we do that conscientiously, we have no reason to fear the unexpected. If we continue to live in the values and in the foundation of our faith in Christ, we have no need to fear the impending.

If we base our lives on the true values of love, peace, friendship, forgiveness, then there is no baggage to be afraid. The readiness is more of a common sense than an extraordinary wisdom. That's why in that first reading, it is very simply portrayed, that wisdom is actually waiting at your gates, at your doors, to be beckoned by you. That means it is always available. We, make it a conscious choice to ignore that call like those bridesmaids, like me in the car. We make those calls to say, maybe I will do it tomorrow. Maybe I will wait a little bit longer to forgive. Maybe I will call that person tomorrow or a day after to seek forgiveness or to offer forgiveness. Until then, what do I do? I live with a baggage of unforgiveness.

Sometimes that can hurt us. So being ready means being sensible, being prepared means listening to your heart, to your conscience, to the call from within to say, do it. Now. Don't let it go. So as a reflection, as we come almost to the end of our lockdowns here in Victoria. A few questions. Maybe. Are you running on an empty tank? Are you constantly tired? Do you feel low on energy to carry out the daily chores and enjoying life? Do you feel that you're weary and lonely and lack a passion for life? Are you running out of oil for life?

Well then, if you are, don't worry, there is a roadside assistance here. Christ Jesus. Make that call today. Run to Jesus, the wisdom of God and Jesus who promises to be with us all the time. He's there for us. He is our roadside assistance. He is going to be with you, filling you until you overflow with life. Christ is waiting for you. As we see in the first reading, wisdom, waiting at your gates at your doors. Christ is waiting for you. So let's not be foolish and say, maybe, I haven't got time. I'm not prepared. I will wait for one more day. Don't do that. Go take your oil flask and fill that with the life that Jesus offers today.
