

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

*O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.*

Psalm 63:2



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2020

NOVEMBER

8

Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917)

November 13

Burly longshoremen glared at the woman in widow's dress who interrupted their drinking to beg money, in broken English, for her orphanage. The bar exploded in laughter as one man responded by spitting in her face. "That was for me," the woman smiled. "Do you have anything for the children?" Given today's national debate, could it be as much

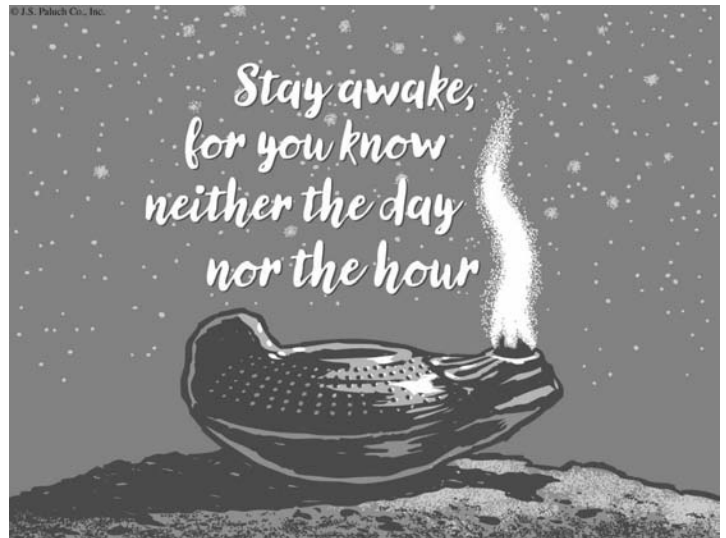
God's sense of humor as God's will for our sanctification that our first American saint should be an immigrant and naturalized citizen? Frances Cabrini, adopting the name Xavier, confided to Pope Leo XIII her longing to follow her Jesuit patron to Asia. But the Pope replied, "Not East—West!" So she and her Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart exchanged exotic dreams of China for the impoverished reality of Italian ghettos across the United States and Central and South America. Before her death, Frances had founded seventy educational, health care, child, and family service institutions. Today, from Siberia to Ethiopia, in sixteen countries, Mother Cabrini's sisters and lay associates embody her practical spirituality: "Let's get to work! We'll have eternity to rest!"

—Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



Readings for the Week

Monday:	Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; 1 Cor 3:9c-11, 16-17; Jn 2:13-22
Tuesday:	Ti 2:1-8, 11-14; Ps 37:3-4, 18, 23, 27, 29; Lk 17:7-10
Wednesday:	Ti 3:1-7; Ps 23:1b-6; Lk 17:11-19
Thursday:	Phlm 7-20; Ps 146:7-10; Lk 17:20-25
Friday:	2 Jn 4-9; Ps 119:1-2, 10-11, 17-18; Lk 17:26-37
Saturday:	3 Jn 5-8; Ps 112:1-6; Lk 18:1-8
Sunday:	Prv 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; Ps 128:1-5; 1 Thes 5:1-6; Mt 25:14-30 [14-15, 19-21]



Expecting the Unexpected

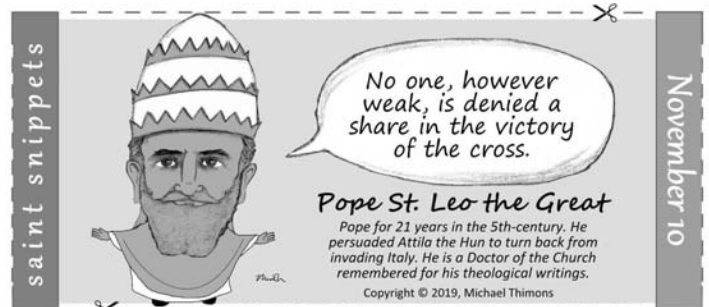
If it ever crossed your mind that Jesus was somewhat lacking in a sense of humor, today's Gospel should belie any such notion. Jesus' story of the five wise and five foolish bridesmaids is downright hilarious. The circumstances of the story were surely familiar to Jesus' listeners, just as they are—if we think about it—to us. Weddings never, ever start on time. There's always a delay. Buttons pop off at the last minute. Flowers wilt. Cars full of wedding guests get caught in traffic. Soloists contract laryngitis. Brides or grooms or priests show up late! So the only reasonable way to approach a wedding is with a sense of humor, to realize that something probably will go awry, and, when that happens, to smile about it.

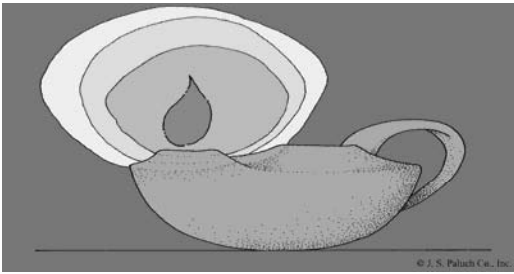
Jesus tells this funny story to encourage us to be watchful, yes; to be ready, yes. But he doesn't tell it to make us dour and somber. The heavy-hearted tremble, waver, lose sight of their place and purpose, and fall asleep. The lighthearted know that the unexpected will happen—is bound to happen—so they are awake in their place and ready in their purpose when it comes.

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Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Monday:	The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
Tuesday:	St. Leo the Great
Wednesday:	St. Martin of Tours; Veterans Day
Thursday:	St. Josaphat
Friday:	St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
Saturday:	Blessed Virgin Mary





Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time November 8, 2020

Stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

— Matthew 25:13

Treasures from Our Tradition

What is the name of the pope's cathedral? If you said the Vatican, or St. Peter's, you were off by a few miles, since the answer is the Basilica of St. John, the Lateran, the "Mother Church" of all the churches of the world and the cathedral of the Diocese of Rome. It takes its name from the Lateran family, the Trumps of their day, who somehow ran afoul of the Emperor Nero. He seized all their property, including their vast Roman palace and estate. We don't know how Plautius displeased Nero so badly, but eventually all the Lateran property came to Constantine, the first Christian emperor, through his wife, Fausta. Early in the fourth century, when Christianity was at last legalized, Constantine gave the property to the church. Soon the great meeting halls were expanded and adapted.

Over the centuries, the church building has been sacked by armies, ruined by fire, torn down, and rebuilt. The oldest and most unchanged part of the Lateran is a vast, separate baptistery with steps leading down to a huge green basalt pool. Imagine what a triumphal moment the dedication of this public church building was for a community that had worshiped in secret for so long! This week's feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica is really about the tradition of consecrating space for worship, and so by extension, a feast for your parish church building and, given the beautiful second reading, for its baptistery as well.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Actions have consequences. As children, we were often told that if we would do something, then we would receive a present or a reward. If we didn't, it might result in a punishment. Geometry also uses the "If-Then Statement." That is what our scriptures are like this Sunday. In each reading, there is a suggested action on our part, which will result in a desired outcome. There is a feminine personification of God as Wisdom, Psalm 63 and the intimate thirsting for God, the letter to the Thessalonians on believing in Christ, and Matthew's parable of the wise and foolish virgins. In the world of instant everything, we are not good about being patient, and our follow-through can be terrible. But each reading in its own way promises us that if we diligently seek God, we will be blessed and rewarded, and that it is worth the work and the wait!

KEEP YOUR LAMPS

In the old spiritual, "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning" we hear the imperative to wait and be ready, and while there are many variations, it usually ends "The world is nearly done." "The time is drawing near." or "The day is dawning nigh." The liturgical year is near its end, and we begin to feel that tension of "already but not yet" as the readings become more eschatological (about the end-times) in nature. We are called to wait patiently. Yet, like the wise and foolish virgins, we run the risk of falling asleep, and or running out of oil. Waiting for God, preparing for God,

requires much hope, much preparation and discipline, and at times it is counter-intuitive. We must put aside impatience or the desire for immediate gratification and keep the end in sight. In running terms, it is not a sprint, but a marathon.

TRIMMED AND BURNING

So how do we do this? Whether we are sitting in the pew or one of those involved more intimately in liturgical ministry, this is a call for spiritual self-maintenance. None of our scriptures today is passive. Seeking and waiting for God

requires work. Presence and participation in the liturgy are among the easiest and most natural ways to provide fuel for our spiritual lamps. But like a car, we need to do more than just put in gasoline. There are other needs to attend to for upkeep. Just read the opportunities in this bulletin! Perhaps you may want to attend a parish scrip-



ture class or find a spiritual book to read. Sign up online to receive the daily readings or some sort of daily reflection. Find a spiritual podcast to listen to on your commute home from work or turn off the news and music and drive in morning silence. Share simple, regular prayer times as a family such as at meals and bedtime. Experience the sacrament of Reconciliation. Or maybe you do too much, and the call is to let go of something. Do not become burned out or lose heart. Take courage and remember, "The day is drawing nigh!" Amen.