

Being prepared pays off

32nd Sunday of the Year (November 10): (R3) Matthew 25:1-13; (R1) Wisdom 6:12-16; (R2) 1 Thesalonians 4:13-18.

As kids, the motto of our troop of the Boy Scouts was, "Be Prepared." We might say the point of our Lord's Parable of the Ten Virgins is also, "Be Prepared."

Most of us know what it's like to be caught unprepared. Many of us can relate to the five foolish virgins who neglected to bring extra oil for their lamps. Those young women had more important things on their mind than oil for their lamps. Often we have left important things undone because we felt there were so many other exciting things to do. Half of the virgins in our Lord's parable were unprepared because they had their minds on other things.

Sometimes being unprepared can be a serious matter. One of the most cherished events in our history was the landing of the Mayflower, when 102 pilgrims stepped from their storm-tossed little ship with unsteady legs and huge relief.

These pilgrims packed as if they had misunderstood the purpose of the trip. They found room for sundials and candle snuffers, a drum, a trumpet and a complete history of the country of Turkey. One man named William Mullins packed 126 pairs of shoes and 13 pairs of boots. Yet the pilgrims failed to bring a single cow or horse, plow or fishing line. Among the professions on the Mayflower were two tailors, a printer, several merchants, a silk worker, a shopkeeper and a hatter — not exactly the most appropriate occupations when one thinks of surviving in a hostile environment. With the exception of Miles Standish, probably none in the party had ever tried to bring down a wild animal.

These pilgrims were, in short, dangerously unprepared for the rigors ahead, and they demonstrated their incompetence in the most dramatic possible way by dying in droves. Six expired in the first two weeks, eight in the next month, 17



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

more in February, a further 13 in March. By April, when the Mayflower set sail back to England, just 54 people, nearly half of them children, were left to begin the long work of turning this tenuous foothold into a self-sustaining colony.

What were they thinking of? The same question could be asked of us. What are many young people thinking of nowadays when they fail to prepare themselves for a rapidly changing, high-tech world? What are parents thinking of when they ignore their children's preparation for a world of peer pressure and deadly drugs? What are we thinking of when we spend our lives accumulating funds for old age, but ignore the spiritual side of our lives?

Jesus' parable causes us to ask if we are prepared spiritually. On the surface his parable is about preparing for his return. He will return, there is no doubt. Does that mean we should live in fear and anxiety about his return? Why should we? We are his brothers and sisters. God loves us. His son died for us and left a church to take care of us. Whatever the future holds, we know that it will be good, because a good God is in charge and will never forsake his own.

Sharon Whitley tells about her dad. He was always her hero. During her awkward teen years, her dad gave her confidence in herself. He taught her about boys and self-respect. When she decided to go into teaching, Sharon's dad offered his encouragement. But when Sharon got a job at a rough, inner-city school, her dad worried about her working in that environment.

One evening, Sharon stayed after

school to grade some papers. When she finally left, she found the school's gate locked, but she was able to squeeze through. Just as she headed for her car, a gang of young men came around the corner and began chasing her. As she ran toward her car, Sharon searched her purse for her keys. Miraculously she found a lone key at the bottom of her purse and shoved it into her car door. It worked. She got into her car just in time to escape the young men. When Sharon got home that evening, her dad mentioned that he had made an extra key for her car and left it in her purse. It was this key that Sharon had found in her moment of fear and need. Sharon suddenly realized that her dad had been watching out for her, even when she wasn't aware of it.

Likewise, God our Father is looking out for us. Whatever the future holds for us, he will never leave us in the dark. With Jesus' parable in mind, let us determine to prepare spiritually for whatever life may bring.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

DAILY READINGS

Monday, November 11

Titus 1:1-9; Psalms 24:1-6; Luke 17:1-6

Tuesday, November 12

Titus 2:1-8; 11-14; Psalms 37:3-4, 18, 23, 29; Luke 17:7-10

Wednesday, November 13

Titus 3:1-7; Psalms 23:1-6; Luke 17:11-19

Thursday, November 14

Philemon 7-20; Psalms 146:7-10; Luke 17:20-25

Friday, November 15

2 John 4-9; Psalms 119:1-2, 10-11, 17-18; Luke 17:26-37

Saturday, November 16

3 John 5-8; Psalms 112:1-6; Luke 18:1-8

Thoughts to Consider



EDWIN SULEWSKI

Funeral Director

How can I help someone who is grieving?

You can help in a number of special ways. Through reaching out and offering support in the form of listening and presence you will help a great deal. Ask your friend how they are doing. Mention the deceased by name and allow the bereaved to continue discussion about the deceased if they wish. Many bereaved report feeling isolated. You can help by including them in your social groups. Contact with the grieving is most important during the period right after the death and in the three or four months following when the bereaved feel especially isolated. Reach out and make your presence felt.

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