

Lectionary readings: Joshua 24: 1-3a: 14-25; Psalm 78: 1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18; Matthew 25: 1-13

For reflection and prayer

- **Joshua 24:** *'Worship God in total commitment Say an unqualified Yes to God.'* Are our hearts engaged in our worship or are we just going through the motions? Have we said an unqualified yes to God so that God comes into every part of our lives and is at the centre of our lives? Or is our ego at the centre of how we live? The people said, *'We'd never forsake God. Never! We'd never leave God to worship other gods.'* We have our own gods today, that is, those things that get in the way of our worship, that squeeze out God. It might be good for us this week to reflect on those things that we put in place of God.
- **Psalm 78:** The Psalmist urges us to *'listen well to the inner promptings of the Spirit for within your heart Love speaks ... spiritual truths to guide you upon the paths of peace.'* I wonder how open we are to the Spirit of God within us? Do we spend time listening to what God might want to say to us? Or are our lives so crowded and noisy that we can't hear the still, small voice within? The Psalmist also urges us to teach our children to listen to the inner Voice so that they too might know God, their Beloved, and be free to follow Love. He says, *'And model to the children Love's way as we have been shown.'*
- **1 Thessalonians 4:** The Thessalonian believers were concerned about those who had died. Paul says that we should not be full of sorrow like people who have no

hope when someone dies. Today there seems to be a lot of agnosticism about life after death and what happens to us when we die, even among believers. All I need to know is that the God who accompanies me through every moment of my life will be with me through death and into life beyond. I don't need to know any other details. I am happy to live with unknowing. Surely that is what faith is.

- **Matthew 25:** This parable of the bridesmaids is usually interpreted to mean that we need to prepare ourselves to be ready to meet with God at the end of our life so that we share in the eternal Banquet. But we can interpret it differently. How alert, awake, ready, open are we to God coming to us here and now in our everyday lives? God is the God of surprises. He shows up in unexpected ways, in unimaginable places and in unlikely people. We need sensitivity and attentiveness to sense God's presence in life. We need awareness to recognise God's presence with us moment by moment. Let's be open this week to sense God's presence with us wherever we are.

A Prayer

God, our constant Companion and Friend, grant that we might live the miracle of now and be where we are, for that is the only place where we can experience You - in the here and now. Give us grace to be attentive to You in the stranger's smile, in the little acts of love, in the beauty of creation. May we not miss this week our neighbour's gift or our enemy's need, but see You in everyone and give thanks. May we see You coming to us this week in everything that we experience so that our hearts may be enlarged and our vision of You extended. Amen.