

HEARERS OF THE WORD

Wisdom 6:12-16; Psalm 63 (62); 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13

Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour

Matt 25:1 [Jesus said:] “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ 13 Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

At this point in the Liturgical Year, the lectionary turns to the end of time and to the teachings on watchfulness. Our parable today is unique to Matthew, although there are passages in Mark and Luke which resemble it in some way (see below Mark 13:33-37 and Luke 12:35-38).

KIND OF WRITING

There are several kinds of parables in the New Testament: “original” parables which are often disorienting and later more didactic parables. Our text belongs to this second category, which is more “teaching” and in general the meaning is plain. It is good to bear in mind that a single parable will never give all we need to bear in mind, but only some aspects. Thus questions such as the meanness of



The 5 Wise Bridesmaids (Erfurt Cathedral)

the wise virgins are not real questions in the context. The bottom line here is that there are some things, both in life and in faith, which others cannot do for us.

This parable has clear links with the two preceding parables.

OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

(i) Wisdom is portrayed as a woman, metaphorically offering shelter, nourishment and companionship (for examples see Proverbs 1:20-33 and 2:16-19). These fundamental needs stand as a metaphor for our need of God’s Wisdom, which “completes” the human being, just as men and women complement and complete each other. The Wisdom of God offers us shelter, nourishment and companionship.

(ii) At the same time, the theme of the end-time banquet is presented as a wedding feast, combining several themes from the Old Testament: Amos 9:13-14; Hosea 14:7; Jeremiah 21:12; Isaiah 25; 1 Enoch 10:18-19; 2 Baruch 29:2-5. Marriage symbolism for the covenant can be found in Isaiah 54:4-8; 62:4-5; Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 1-2; Jeremiah 3:1-12; Ezekiel 16 and 23; Song of Songs as a whole.

NEW TESTAMENT FORGROUND

(i) Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

To engage with today’s readings, it might be helpful to go back in your own mind to someone in your life whom you regard as really wise. When did you become aware of it? Have you benefitted from it? If someone were to ask how would you recognise wisdom and what are its marks, what would you say? Have you learned from your encounters with wise people?

Do you desire wisdom for yourself? Perhaps as parent or friend or family member or colleague. Do you nourish your hunger (!) for the qualities and attitudes which we associate with people who have learned from life?

PRAYER

All-wise and loving God, the desire for you lies deep within us. Awaken us to the quest for true wisdom that by being true to ourselves we make come home to you, the source of all wisdom. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake. (Mark 13:33-37)

(ii) Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. (Luke 12:35-38)

(iii) This parable is found in a rich parable section in Matthew which deals with the end of time. As the parable is unique to this Gospel, its location in the text is important (see the chart).

(iv) Elsewhere Matthew uses the language of marriage (groom: 9:15 in reference to himself; wedding Matthew 22:2-

4, 8-12; 25:10), an important clue to the identity of the groom.

(v) Across chapters 24 and 25, several themes bounce around in a quite prodigious way. Here's a list:

Watch therefore: 24:42; 25:13; *unexpected returns or arrivals:* 24:37, 42-44, 50; 25:10, 19; *delays in arrival:* 24:48; 25:5, 19; *the coming of the Son of Man:* 24:27, 30, 37, 44; 25:31; *praises of faithful servants:* 24:46; 25:21, 23, 25, 34; *the use of "Lord":* 25:11, 24, 37, 44; *exclusions from the presence:* 24:51; 25:10, 30, 46. Clearly, these chapters, with the careful sequence of precisely seven parables, was of immense significance to the evangelist.

ST PAUL

(i) On wisdom: "My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory." (1 Corinthians 2:4-7)

(ii) On watchfulness: "But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him" (1 Thessalonians 5:8-11)

BRIEF COMMENTARY

Verse 1 Kingdom of heaven is a Matthean expression. The nuptial imagery—taken from the Old Testament—is established immediately. It refers to the covenant, of course, but also to the end of time (cf. the bride of the Lamb in the book of Revelation).

Verses 2-4 Essential information is given succinctly—an attentive reader will "hear" the comparison of the wise woman and the foolish woman from the wisdom books of the Bible, especially the book of Proverbs.

Verse 5 Delay is a theme of Matthew at this point in his gospel. It reflects the experience of the delay of the "Second Coming", the *parousia*, and a consequent dilution of expectation and readiness. The early church was settling down! See

Verses	Contents	Source
24: 1-44	following Mk 13, + additions and changes	Mk/Q/M
24: 45-25:30	parables of delay (Steward, <i>Virgins</i> , Talents)	Q/M/Q
25: 31-46	parable of the Last Judgement	M

- a) The fig tree as a parable of the coming of the Son of Man
- b) As in the days of Noah
- c) As when a burglar comes
- d) As with a faithful servant when his master returns
- e) *As with bridesmaids awaiting the bridegroom*
- f) As with talents given to servants to work with
- g) As with sheep and goats separated by the shepherd

24:8.

Verses 6-7 Midnight measures the delay—i.e. into the night, but not that far into the night. Unexpected arrivals are a feature of this whole section in Matthew. Interestingly, *all ten* fell asleep (v. 5) and *all ten* woke just in time.

Verse 8 Outside the parable, the request might seem logical, giving the others a chance to be "Christian"!

Verse 9 The refusal has behind it a conviction about personal engagement. Visually perhaps we are meant to think of torches soaked in oil rather than lamps.

Verse 10 The foolish ones go shopping, finally bestirred to action but too late. The shutting of the door is a hard saying. The image comes up already in 24:13. Like all the parables, it does not offer a comprehensive picture of reality but selected dimensions to trigger reflection. One cannot keep life's commitments endlessly on hold.

Verse 11 "Lord, Lord" is used elsewhere in this Gospel in a tremendous warning: "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?'*" (Matthew 7:21-22)

Verse 12 The previous citation contin-

ues: "*Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'*" (Matthew 7:23). This is also a hard saying, meant to provoke.

Verse 13 Day and hour occur elsewhere (Matthew 20:12; 24:36, 50; 25:13). Not knowing and watchfulness are features in these chapters in Matthew.

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. While the parable has clear end-of-time applications, it can also be applied to any moment of grace. It reminds us that moments of grace come unexpectedly, and we need to be awake to receive them. Recall times when you were alert for such a moment. What were the consequences for you?

2. Grace can also be disturbing. We can be coasting along in life and suddenly an opportunity or a graced moment arrives and we are shaken out of our routine in order to respond. Perhaps you can recall both moments when you were unprepared and moments when you were able to respond. What lessons have you learned from such experiences?

3. We may be tempted to judge the wise virgins as being selfish for not sharing with the others, but perhaps Jesus is teaching us that there are some things that other people cannot provide for us. We have to acquire them ourselves. What qualities in life do you see as the essential oil that you must provide for yourself?

PRAYER

Almighty and ever-living God, remove the obstacles that stand in our way, that unimpeded in body and soul, we may freely devote ourselves to your service.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.



The 5 Foolish Bridesmaids (Erfurt)

Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep

1 Thess 4:13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are *asleep*, so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and *rose again*, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen *asleep* as Christians (lit. through Jesus). 15 For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the *coming of the Lord*, will surely not *go ahead* of those who have fallen *asleep*. 16 For the Lord himself will *come down from heaven with a shout of command*, with the *voice of the archangel*, and with the *trumpet of God*, and the dead in Christ will *rise first*. 17a Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly *caught up* together with them *in the clouds* 17b *to meet the Lord in the air*. 17c And so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Our reading will be familiar from its use at funerals. Today affords an opportunity to read it, so to speak, for its own sake and in its own context. Parts of it are perfectly clear, such as vv. 13-14 and 17c. The intervening verses use the traditional vocabulary of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic (marked above in italics). Such language is largely foreign to us and may benefit from a word of explanation. The main point, however, is clear and in plain terms: *we shall always be with the Lord*.

KIND OF WRITING

(i) The apocalyptic religious movement in Judaism arose in a particular setting, that of persecution for the faith, particularly under the Syrian Antiochus IV Epiphanes. A good example is the second part of the book of Daniel or indeed Mark 13. While it arose in an identifiable historical context, nevertheless, this worldview was responding to a universal question: where is God in the midst of evil and suffering? Using a mixture of myth, metaphor and narrative, faithful Jews affirmed that although it was not now evident, God would indeed establish his kingdom. The present anguish is really “labour pains”, giving birth to the future. In the future kingdom of God, the resurrection of the

dead will take place. Accordingly, what is expected of the faithful in the present moment is steadfastness. God *will show himself* to be faithful; in the meantime, believers are called to be faithful to our faithful God.

Paul was an apocalyptic Jewish believer and thinker. Paul understood the resurrection of Jesus to be the first-fruits of the harvest of humanity.

(ii) This paragraph (as does 5:1-11) falls into a simple rhetorical format.

- v. 13a Introduction or *exordium*
- v. 13b Thesis or *propositio*
- vv. 14-17 Proofs or *probationes*
- v. 18 Conclusion or *peroratio*

ORIGIN OF THE READING

The Christ-believers in Thessalonica did send Paul a number of questions about the end of time. One anxiety might seem strange to us: will those already dead be at a disadvantage at the Second Coming (our reading)? They also wanted to know the timing of the end (5:1-11; next Sunday we read 5:1-6).

RELATED PASSAGES

For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the first-fruits; then when Christ comes, those who belong to him. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he has brought to an end all rule and all authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15:22-24)

Like the one made of dust, so too are those made of dust, and like the one from heaven, so too those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, let us also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:48-49)

BRIEF COMMENTARY

Verse 13 As always, the Pauline double negative is not without its power. The address to “brothers and sisters” indicates a new topic. Sleep is a common metaphor for death (our word cemetery comes from the Greek *koimētērion*, the bedroom or resting place). Correspondingly, the Greek for resurrection (*anasta-*

sis) means literally to wake/get up. The metaphor already indicates that the state of death is temporary. Paul acknowledges the need to grieve, but in a Christian way.

Verse 14 Paul starts by drawing on their faith in Jesus (as he does in 1 Corinthians 15). Jesus’ resurrection is an anticipation of the resurrection of all. The phrase translated as “as Christians” is lit. “through Jesus”, as it stands closer to “asleep” in Greek than in the NRSV. The Jerusalem Bible in the lectionary gets it right. Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

Verse 15 Paul has this “word from the Lord,” i.e. in discernment and prayer. The *order of the end* was part of the apocalyptic curiosity. Cf. *But each in his own order...* (1 Corinthians 15:23) So, no special advantage of the living. How is that?

Verses 16-17 Using the language of apocalyptic, Paul imagines the sequence pictorially. First, Jesus will descend. Then, the (already) dead will be raised. Finally, the dead and living will be brought *together* into Christ’s presence. (The language of “caught up” gave rise to a whole Christian movement called “the rapture.”) 17c captures Paul’s teaching in plain, non-apocalyptic language: death will not shatter our relationship with Jesus.

Verse 18 In the conclusion, Paul is not denying the natural need to grieve, only that we ought not to do it as people who have no hope. V. 18 matches the conclusion of the next discussion: *Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, just as you are in fact doing* (1 Thess 5:11)

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. What has been my own experience of grieving? Did my faith/hope help me in a wholesome way to get through the pain of loss?
2. Our future communion with those who have died can be a great consolation. Has that been my experience?
3. Nowadays, we are very aware of the need to support and encourage each other in difficult time? Where do I find support? Do I myself support others?

PRAYER

Creator God, our mysterious origin is in you and we journey back to you, our Father. Help us place our faith in you, trusting you will take us across the bar of death into your loving presence. Amen.

Wisdom makes herself known

Wis 6:12 Wisdom is radiant and unfading
and is easily discerned by those who love her
and found by those who seek her;
13 she anticipates those who set their desire on her
to make herself known in advance.
14 Those who rise early for her will not have to labour,
for they will find her sitting at their gates.
15 For to fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding,
and those who lie awake on her account will quickly be free from care,
16 because she goes about seeking those worthy of her
and graciously appears to them in their paths
and meets them in every thought. (NETS version)

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Who does not wish to be wise? And yet, what is true wisdom and how do we attain it? In the Hebrew Bible (MT) and the Greek Old Testament (LXX), the figure of wisdom was poetically personified as a woman. In the patriarchal society of the time, women represented shelter, food and companionship. Likewise, the "wisdom from on high" will shelter all, proving nourishment and companionship throughout life. The Book of Wisdom builds in this ancient tradition in a thoroughly innovative and thrilling way, using the very best of Hellenistic culture paradoxically to counter the core values of that very culture.

KIND OF WRITING

The Wisdom of Solomon is in three fairly clear sections:

- 1:1-6:21 The Book of Eschatology
- 6:22-11:1 The Book of Wisdom
- 11:2-19:22 The Book of History

Our reading comes from the long first part, really a kind of appetiser (*exordium*) to awaken the desire or whet the appetite for wisdom. The writer wants to show that lack of wisdom is catastrophic for the outcome of your life, thus leading into the the second part which includes a great prayer for wisdom (6:22-11:1). The opening section itself is in five concentric parts, comparing and contrasting the pious and the impious.

- A. Exhortation to Justice (1:1-15)
- B. Speech of the impious (1:16-2:24)
- C. Four Contrasts (3:1-4:20)
 - 3:1-12 reward v. punishment
 - 3:13-19 blessed v. dishonour
 - 4:1-6 virtue v. evil
 - 4:7-20 rest v. anguish

- B¹. Speech of the impious (5:1-23)
- A¹. Exhortation to Wisdom (6:1-21)
 - 6:1-11 Exhortation to rulers
 - 6:12-21 *The qualities of Wisdom*

ORIGIN OF THE READING

The Wisdom of Solomon was written in Greek for the Jewish diaspora in Alexandria in Egypt. The immediate setting was the immensely impressive Graeco-Roman culture: peace, prosperity, education, statecraft and religion(s). The book is aimed at young men training for positions within the Jewish community. Given the attractiveness of the surrounding culture, young people would have been easily led astray from their ancestral faith. The book is written to show them that the true wisdom they seek is to be found in the ancestral faith. The writer uses the full armoury of Greek persuasion and literary skill.

The appearance for the first time of certain Greek words suggests the period of Octavian (63 BC – AD 14) who ruled as Augustus from 27 BC onwards.

RELATED READING

There is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things. For she is a *breath* of the power of God, and a pure *emanation* of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a *reflection* of eternal light, a spotless *mirror* of the working of God, and an *image* of his goodness. (Wisdom 7:22–26)

BRIEF COMMENTARY

Verse 12 Radiant or bright: a regular description of virtue at the time. Cf. *the statutes of the Lord are upright, making glad the heart; the commandment of the Lord is radiant, enlightening the eyes.* (LXX Psalm 18:9)

Unfading points to immortality or deathlessness. The quest for wisdom is marked by love, arising deep within the person: *The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction, and concern for instruction is love of her.* (Wisdom 6:17) *If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord will lavish her upon you.* (Sirach 1:26)

Verse 13 The encounter is two-way and so Wisdom comes to meet us. Wisdom symbolises, in feminine mode, God's grace, initiative and intervention. She wants to make herself known to those who desire her.

Verse 14 Rising early is literally anticipating the dawn. Rising early is promoted elsewhere: *The one who seeks God will accept his discipline, and those who rise early to seek him will find favour.* (Sirach 32:14) The gates are the privileged place for meeting both the wise and wisdom. *Happy is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my door.* (Proverbs 8:34) *Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates.* (Proverbs 31:31)

Verse 15 Perfect understanding, following Plato, includes both theoretical and practical wisdom. Cf. 8:21; 7:7; 8:7. To lie awake is to keep vigil: *Happy is the man who will listen to me and the person who will guard my ways, keeping watch at my doors daily, protecting the posts of my entrances.* (Proverbs 8:34) To be free from care was a *desideratum* of the popular philosophies.

Verse 16 This is a great three-fold affirmation of Wisdom's desire to meet those who seek her. Being worthy and unworthy is a theme of the book: *...and having been disciplined a little, they will be greatly benefited, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself.* (Wisdom 3:5)

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The human quest for Wisdom is matched by Wisdom's quest for humanity. It is not all our effort, but rather a grace from God.
2. Have I found the right rhythm of life which is favour a reflected life, with time for prayer and meditation?
3. To know the gift of God, I have to desire it with my whole self.

PRAYER

Loving and wise God, our hearts are restless until they rest in you. May we be faithful to the journey inwards. Amen.

THE LITURGY

Wisdom 6:12-16; Psalm 63 (62); 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13

READINGS 1 AND 3

The first reading is read to stir our desire for that wisdom from on above (James 3:17). It prepares well for the contrasting of the wise and the foolish.

THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM

The marvellous Psalm 63 (62) awakens desire, showing us how to pray.

SUNDAY INTRODUCTIONS

First reading

Wisdom 6:12-16

In all cultures, high and low, there is a quest for Wisdom — how to live, to relate, to manage things. In the Bible such wisdom is really a gift from God, portrayed as a woman who offers shelter, nourishment and companionship.

Second reading

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The believers in Thessalonica asked Paul about those who had already died: would they be at a disadvantage at the end of time? Paul gives a careful answer, using the typical imagery of the period. The bottom line is we shall all be with the Lord forever. It's enough!

Gospel

Matthew 25:1-13

The parable today was very popular in the past. Today, we might feel it was a bit mean of the wise bridesmaids not to share with the others. The point lies elsewhere: they are some things in life no one else can do for us. Becoming wise, in the true sense, is surely one of those.

WEEKDAY INTRODUCTIONS

Monday 9 November

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

Titus 1:1-9

Writing some generations after Paul but in his name, the writer gives a picture of emerging ministries. What qualities do we look for in our pastors?

Luke 17:1-6

Our Gospel is made up of three brief teachings. The expression “little ones”

means, in the context, those just beginning the Christian life.

Tuesday 10 November

St Leo the Great, pope and doctor

Titus 2:1-8, 11-14

We may smile (or otherwise!) at some of the time-bound advice given here, but behind it all is a vision of life transformed by the Good News of Jesus: *grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race.*

Luke 17:7-10

This passage is unique to Luke. It seems to be aimed at emerging “clergy” who feel important or, as we say, are losing the run of themselves. It should be read in conjunction with a contrasting passage in Luke 22:24-27 (NB).

Wednesday 11 November

St Martin of Tours

Titus 3:1-7

After the turmoil of the first paragraph—recognisable in any age—the writer reminds us that all is grace.

Luke 17:11-19

Three little expressions can help in all contexts: “May I?”, “I’m sorry” and “Thank you.” Thanksgiving—eucharist—is at the heart of our worship and our relationship with God.

Thursday 12 November

St Josaphat, bishop and martyr

Philemon 1:7-20

A runaway slave sought refuge with Paul and, in the meantime, had become a believer. Paul entrusted him back to his original master, but no longer as a slave but as a brother in Christ.

Luke 17:20-25

In this Gospel, Jesus says the Kingdom of God is *among you*, a better translation than “within you.” It means the Kingdom is coming to be during the ministry of Jesus and even at the hands of Jesus, as he brings healing and forgiveness.

Friday 13 November

2 John 1:4-9

The reading combines great warmth

and encouragement with a severe warning against heresy, especially that heresy which denies the true humanity of our saviour. The core Johannine message is not lost, however: *this is the commandment which you have heard since the beginning, to live a life of love.*

Luke 17:26-37

Don’t be distracted by the last sentence, which is proverbial wisdom of unclear application. Instead, the core teaching is to look forwards, not backwards, in hope and confidence. As usual, discipleship comes at a cost.

Saturday 14 November

St Laurence O’Toole, bishop

3 John 1:5-8

Here we have a little window onto the world of early Christianity. Those bearing the Gospel depended on the hospitality and good will of the communities they came to visit. *Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.* (Romans 12:13)

Luke 18:1-8

The feisty widow is an appealing character and the parable does indeed illustrate the teaching on the need to pray continually and never to lose heart. The later reception of the parable may be noticed in the added verses.

St Laurence: Festal Readings

Ezek 36:24-28

Ezekiel invites the exiles in Babylon to a real spiritual rebirth and not just a political restoration. What kind of renewal do we need today?

Colossians 3:12-15

St Laurence must often have reflected on these verses in a very busy life, both as Abbot and as Archbishop. Is there something for me?

John 10:11-18

Because it is read on the feast, this reading implies that leadership in the faith community must find its source and model in Jesus himself. Pastors should resemble the Good Shepherd etc. It does raise a question: how may we, by our critical support, enable our pastors to be truly good shepherds today?