

# THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER



NOVEMBER 12, 2023

## LIGHT

*and how much we fear the dark*

by Drew Downs

This week's gospel invites us into a time of waiting in the dark. Waiting without knowing when we will be brought out. Feeling left. Alone. Without anything.

What do we have then? Most of us have homes to return to. Comfort. Electricity. Heat. We can turn on lights or light candles. We gather blankets and relax into couches to watch Netflix and relax. Alone or with family. And even if we are alone, friends are

just a text message away. Chatting while we both watch *Loki*. Saying to each other "Can you believe that? What!!! 🤔"

There's a reason, I think, that we don't like being alone in the dark. And why we don't like to think of others alone in the dark. We worry. We want each other to be safe. And warm. But more than that. We want them to know comfort. And love. And support. We crave connection more than anything.

# ORDINARY TIME

2023

## WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way  
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

### **Anticipating Affirmation**

There is a writing convention we do when inviting people to come to an ordination. At the top of the invitation it reads:

"God willing and the people consenting..."

It's a custom that applies, not only to ordination but to all things sacramental. Because we might super confident that everything we planned to happen will happen, it hasn't yet happened. Our friend, Kristin White is the Bishop-Elect of Southern Ohio, but she isn't bishop until that moment.

It also puts the frame of reference where it ought to be. The presumptive situation should be planned for. But it isn't true yet. It becomes true if God wills it and the people consent to it. *Then* it becomes true. What we can do is *trust* it will happen. We don't get to pretend it already has.

This is the feeling I'm presently associating with the anticipated affirmation this week at our Diocesan Convention to include The Table into the Diocese of Indianapolis as a missional community. This opportunity for us and for The Table feels like a powerful reminder of what can be done to heal bonds of affection and change our own trajectories.

There is a blessed anticipation to it all. One that feels exciting and hopeful. And yet, it doesn't really begin until God wills it and the people consent. Until then, we can anticipate its happening.

With love,  
Drew

# ORDINARY TIME

2023

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## FOR SUNDAY

*Proper 27A*

November 12, 2023

### **Collect**

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **Reading**

Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus said, "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 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.' 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. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

# ORDINARY TIME

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## Reflection

This is another of Jesus's dark parables—those difficult teachings in Jerusalem. One that has a sinister bent to it. Frightened people waiting and some getting left behind. This has clearly informed some dark theology.

And that sensation many of us have in reading—that this doesn't scan right, doesn't sound like Jesus exactly—is a useful reminder to study the context. Because it isn't really a condemnation of "foolishness". Nor is forgetfulness the thing that keeps people out of heaven.

This parable comes after Jesus describes some intense apocalyptic events. Events we often associate with God intervening. But it's quite the opposite. It's human destruction. Violence and devastation by people against other people. Jesus describes God showing up afterward, collecting the people who were virtuous while the world was on fire.

*"Then the Kingdom will be like this..."*

We must also note how this depicts a vision for us to compare the Kin-dom **to...**

Is the Kin-dom a place where only the people out for themselves are rewarded? The people who planned ahead and refused to share? Those who didn't gather the light together to ensure everyone survived the night, waiting? Does that, in fact, sound *anything* like the Kin-dom to us?

I do think prudence, watchfulness, patience, resilience, perseverance are all things that Jesus cares about and teaches. Because they do assure our personal safety. But Jesus spent his entire ministry teaching us to watch out for others. *That* is the picture of the Kin-dom to which we are to compare *this*.

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