

WE WAIT ON GOD IN PRAYER & ARE ENLIGHTENED BY GOD
32nd Sunday in Ordinary time ~ 8 November 2020



The Parable of the Ten Virgins by Phoebe Traquair | public domain [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUNDAY

On the first Sunday of July, we celebrated National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday.

Due to COVID-19, NAIDOC Week was postponed until November 8th-15th this year.

We now light a candle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of this parish community and for their prayer intentions.

Last weekend and this weekend in the homilies, we turn to God's Word for guidance, in the launching [LIGHT-A-CANDLE](#) on our parish social media.

This week we reflect on the images of lamp and lampstand.

As we light a candle and pause to pray, **we wait on God in prayer and are enlightened by God.**

We recall an Old Testament quote on sacred lampstands. And then we move to Jesus in the New Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT

In The Book of Exodus 25:31-40 in the Old Testament, after the *Ark of the Covenant* and the *Table for the Bread of the Presence* are explained, the sacred lampstand is described.

*“You shall make a lampstand of pure gold.
The base and the shaft of the lampstand shall be made of hammered work;
its cups, its calyxes, and its petals shall be of one piece with it;
and there shall be six branches going out of its sides,
three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it
and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it”*

The sacred lampstand was in one place, near the sacred *Ark of the Covenant*.

NEW TESTAMENT

In Jesus, the lampstand of the love and light of Jesus is everywhere. It is not restricted to one geographic place at any given time.

As we move into the New Testament, we reflect today on passages that can help us to widen our prayer intentions in **LIGHT-A-CANDLE** and praying to God.

- Matthew 5:14-16
- Revelation 1:10-13
- Matthew 25:1-13
- St Augustine linking Matthew 5:14-16 and Galatians 6:14
- Matthew 23:23
- Matthew 11:2

Through the lampstand of Jesus, the goodness of God’s loving actions shine forward. We recalled last week at the launch of **LIGHT-A-CANDLE**, an early passage from Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 5:14-16. Jesus said:

‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.’

People were familiar with a lamp and a lampstand at home. They needed to see. It was an image from daily use. We are called to let the light of God shine in us.

REVELATION 1:10-13

A lampstand can also be a symbol of Christian community that brings the light of Jesus to the world around it. In the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation we hear

***“I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day,
and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying,
‘Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches,
to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira,***



Menorah of the Temple - reconstruction

*to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.’
Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me,
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,
and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man,
clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest.’ “*

In verse 1:20 it is explained what the seven lampstands symbolize:
‘the seven lampstands are the seven churches’.

Our community is represented in **LIGHT-A-CANDLE** by a photo of one part of our church sanctuary with the Lectionary on the Table of God’s Word an inner Cross made by a member of the parish, and a wonderful view of creation to the west, taken before last light in the evening.

Creation extends beyond the outer Cross in the photo. The outer Cross reminds us of our mission to follow Jesus into the world.

In the Book of Revelations, chapter 1, the image of the lampstands was not restricted to the community of Ephesus, but included all seven Christian communities in the region. The image of lampstands was inclusive.

We invite Christian communities around the Archdiocese, around the nation and overseas, if they wish, to **LIGHT-A-CANDLE** in the communal lampstand on the local parish social media.

TODAY’S GOSPEL - MATTHEW 25:1-13

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells a parable of ten bridesmaids, each with a lamp.

*‘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.'*

We all are invited to the wedding banquet of God's eternal love.
We need to take this invitation seriously.
We need to be prepared. We bring urgency to prayer.
Jesus reminds us that we can miss out.

*How does the parable of the ten bridesmaids help us to focus now more deeply on Jesus,
in the way we live our lives and, in our prayer, today?*

Through the mercy of God,
we are continually given opportunities to love God.

The word "**know**" in this passage is not limited to the English sense,
but is in the fuller Biblical sense.

God in love, **knows** us **intimately**.
We are called to know God intimately in love.

May our hearts be alight in love of God.
We wait on God in prayer and are enlightened by God
to live our lives, in love of God and in love of neighbour.

ST AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354 – 430 AD)

The symbol of oil in the lamp represents for us,
our love and living in God.
The oil also represents our love offered humbly to God.

St Augustine of Hippo (in Africa) linked the lamp and the cross.
Let us return to the passage in Matthew 5:14-16.

*'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.
No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket,
but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.
In the same way, let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.'*

Good works show the light
of God's grace working in us.
Any praise and glory is to God, not us.

From Augustine we recall
that as a lamp, we need to preserve humility in the lampstand,
through which brightness is visible.
Otherwise, pride can snuff out the brightness in us.

In humility, all of us were born into this world naked.
Humbly, we need to be transparent and translucent.
And not block out the vision of God for others.

Augustine reflected in a homily, on St Paul shining in the lampstand when St Paul said, in Galatians 6:14:

“May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

We humbly carry the cross.

On the landing page of [LIGHT-A-CANDLE](#), the Cross is prominent.

We are invited to pray to God about the cross and ourselves.

We pray to God about what it means for us today as Christian disciples, that, through the cross of Jesus Christ,

- the world has been crucified to us
- we have been crucified to the world

The following two quotes from Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel give us an opportunity to reflect on what are our prayer intentions.

[MATTHEW 23:23](#)

In Matthew 23:23 Jesus implores us not to neglect the weightier matters of *“justice and mercy and faith”*.

Lighting a candle and praying for people’s birthdays and celebrations and saying thanks, are encouraged.

But we also remember to light a candle and pray for the weightier matters of *“justice and mercy and faith”* in our lives and in the wider human family.

[MATTHEW 11:28-30](#)

As we come before Jesus in prayer, may we find rest.

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus invites us:

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

May our hearts be alight in love of God.

We wait on God in prayer and are enlightened by God
to live our lives, in love of God and in love of neighbour.

Let us pray

Fr Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/110820.cfm>