Longing for the Oil Q&A Guide (Catholic Edition)

Nov 10, 2026

About this guide: this is the Catholic edition of the Longing for the Oil guide. Anyone is welcome to use it, including members of the Intercessor Church Community Groups. Read it before class or on your own so you come prepared and well versed in the passage. It follows the group outline section by section. For each question it gathers what the Church Fathers, St. Thomas Aquinas, the popes, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church say, then adds a Summary that pulls it together and a Deep Dive with background and passages to read ahead of time.

About this week's outline: the outline for this week came in a shorter format, with a sermon summary and four discussion questions. This guide covers all four, in order, and adds questions from the week's readings and sermon summary so the study keeps its usual six sections. A label under each question shows where it comes from. Questions labeled "Outline question" are the outline's own four discussion questions, in order: question 1 is A1 and A2, question 2 is C1 and C2, question 3 is D2 and E1, and question 4 is F1 and F3. Questions labeled "Added question" come from the week's readings or the outline's sermon summary, and section B comes from Amos 5:18-24, one of the week's readings.

How to read this guide: each question is labeled by section and number, so A1 is the first question in section A, A2 is the second, and so on. The questions are written for this guide. Each one covers the ground of the outline or its readings and takes it a step further. The linked passage after a question is the one the outline points to, or a verse inside the week's readings, so you can click it and read it in class. Anything after the word "also" is a wider range or an extra passage this guide adds. Every line under Commentary and Catechism of the Catholic Church is quoted word for word from the source named in parentheses after it. The **Summary** and **Deep Dive** under each question are written for this guide, drawing on those quotes and the other sources listed at the end. Scripture quoted in the summaries and deep dives is from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE), and CCC numbers are paragraph numbers in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

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This guide follows the Intercessor Church Community Group outline "Longing for the Oil" for November 8, 2026 (Proper 27).

A. A Simple Faith That Shapes Our Lives

A1. The early church summed up its hope in one plain line of the Apostles' Creed: Jesus "will come again to judge the living and the dead." Why does a simple confession like that shape daily life more than detailed end-time charts and timetables do? (also Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:36)

Outline question 1, first part

Commentary

- "yet these calculations come and pass away, and still the coming of the Bridegroom is delayed, and the virgins who had gone to meet him sleep." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "it is not that they know the details of what awaits them, but they know in general terms that their life will not end in emptiness." (Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi 2)
- "From the earliest times, the prospect of the Judgement has influenced Christians in their daily living as a criterion by which to order their present life, as a summons to their conscience, and at the same time as hope in God's justice." (Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi 41)
- "This verse echoes the tradition that the precise time of the parousia is not revealed to human beings" (NABRE note on Acts 1:7)

- "He shows that the time intervening will not be short, leading His disciples away from the expectation that His kingdom was quite immediately to appear." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 78 on Matthew)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "From the beginning, the apostolic Church expressed and handed on her faith in brief formulae normative for all." (CCC 186)
- "This Creed is the spiritual seal, our heart's meditation and an ever-present guardian; it is, unquestionably, the treasure of our soul." (CCC 197, quoting St. Ambrose)
- "Only the Father knows the day and the hour; only he determines the moment of its coming." (CCC 1040)

Summary

A simple creed keeps our eyes on a person instead of a calendar. People keep calculating the end, yet the calculations come and go while the Bridegroom is still delayed (Augustine). Christians do not know the details of what lies ahead, but they know their lives will not end in emptiness (Pope Benedict XVI). From the start, the coming judgment has shaped how Christians order their daily lives, stirring their conscience and their hope in God's justice (Pope Benedict XVI). The exact time of Christ's return has never been revealed (NABRE note), and Jesus let his disciples know the wait would not be short (Chrysostom). Only the Father knows the day and the hour (CCC 1040). From the beginning, the Church has handed on her faith in short formulas meant for everyone (CCC 186), and the Creed is the treasure of our soul (CCC 197, quoting St. Ambrose).

Deep Dive

The Apostles' Creed is the ancient baptismal creed of the Church of Rome (CCC 194). At the ascension two men in white told the disciples, "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Jesus had just told them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority" (Acts 1:7). In Matthew he says, "But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matthew 24:36). Paul calls his appearing "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13), and the Bible closes with the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). The Church still prays it in the old Aramaic words Marana tha (CCC 1403).

Read before class: Acts 1:6-11; Matthew 24:36-44; Titus 2:11-14

A2. We live closer to Christ's return than any generation before us. If you took that seriously this week, what would you stop putting off, what would you start, and who would you want to talk to? (also Matthew 24:42-44)

Outline question 1, second part

Commentary

- "It would be good to consider for a moment: one day will be the last. If it were today, how prepared am I?" (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2017)
- "Being wise and prudent means not waiting until the last moment to correspond to God's grace, but to do so actively and immediately, starting right now." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 8, 2020)
- "Watch with the heart, watch with faith, watch with hope, watch with charity, watch with good works" (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "For indeed we know the day and the hour neither of that future time when the Bridegroom will come, nor of our own falling asleep each of us; if then we be prepared for this latter, we shall also be prepared when that voice shall sound, which shall arouse us all." (St. Augustine, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)
- "The second coming of Christ and the judgment of the world are the doctrinal bases for the moral exhortation to readiness through vigilance and a virtuous life" (NABRE note on 2 Peter 3:11-16)
- "To keep death before one's eyes daily." (Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 4)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "In prayer the disciple keeps watch, attentive to Him Who Is and Him Who Comes, in memory of his first coming in the lowliness of the flesh, and in the hope of his second coming in glory." (CCC 2612)
- "Since we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly" (CCC 1036)

Summary

This is an application question. Common answers: going to confession, making peace with someone, sharing faith with a friend or family member, setting aside time for prayer or a weekday Mass, giving generously, and dropping habits we would not want him to find. Imagine that today is the last day and ask how ready you are (Pope Francis). Wisdom means not waiting until the last moment to respond to God's grace, but starting right now (Pope Francis). We watch with the heart, with faith, with hope, with charity, and with good

works (Augustine). If we are ready for our own death, we will also be ready for his coming (Augustine, quoted in the Catena Aurea). His return is the reason Scripture calls us to vigilance and a virtuous life (NABRE note), and keeping death before our eyes daily is an old Christian habit (Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 4). In prayer we keep watch, remembering his first coming and hoping for his second (CCC 2612).

Deep Dive

Just before the parable, Jesus said, "Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come" (Matthew 24:42). He added, "So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come" (Matthew 24:44). Those two verses were the Gospel acclamation at Mass on November 8 (USCCB). Peter describes believers "conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter 3:11-12). John says, "Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). Readiness is not panic. It is living today the way we would want him to find us.

Read before class: Matthew 24:42-44; 2 Peter 3:8-14; 1 John 3:1-3

A3. The creed says Jesus is coming "to judge." How can that promise be both a comfort and a sobering call, and why did it give the early church such urgency to share the gospel? (also 2 Peter 3:11-14; Acts 1:8)

Added question, from the outline's opening summary about the early church

Commentary

- "The judgement of God is hope, both because it is justice and because it is grace." (Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi 47)
- "Nevertheless grace allows us all to hope, and to go trustfully to meet the Judge whom we know as our 'advocate', or parakletos" (Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi 47)
- "Let us not comfort ourselves by the delay. For when it must certainly happen, the delay profits us nothing." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 8 on First Thessalonians)
- "It is the time of mercy; repent." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "delay of the Lord's second coming is not a failure to fulfill his word but rather a sign of his patience: God is giving time for repentance before the final judgment" (NABRE note on 2 Peter 3:8-10)
- "The Lord fulfilling these words waiteth for us from day to day, that we respond to His holy admonitions by our works." (Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "Yet the Son did not come to judge, but to save and to give the life he has in himself." (CCC 679)
- "It inspires a holy fear of God and commits them to the justice of the Kingdom of God. It proclaims the 'blessed hope' of the Lord's return" (CCC 1041)
- "It is from God's love for all men that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigor of her missionary dynamism, 'for the love of Christ urges us on.'" (CCC 851)

Summary

His coming is a comfort to those who belong to him and a wake-up call to those who are drifting. God's judgment is a source of hope because it is both justice and grace (Pope Benedict XVI). Grace lets us go to meet the Judge with trust, because he is also our advocate (Pope Benedict XVI). The delay is no reason to relax, because his coming is certain (Chrysostom). Now is the time of mercy and repentance (Augustine), and the delay itself is a sign of God's patience, giving time for repentance (NABRE note). The Lord waits day by day for us to answer him with our lives (Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue). The Son came to save and give life, not to condemn (CCC 679), the message of judgment inspires holy fear and the blessed hope (CCC 1041), and God's love for all people is what drives the Church's mission (CCC 851).

Deep Dive

Peter explains the delay: the Lord "is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Before the ascension Jesus said, "you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Grace trains us "to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope" (Titus 2:12-13). The one who is coming to judge is the same one who "did not come to judge, but to save" (CCC 679), which is why his return is good news for those who belong to him. Each day of delay is another day for someone to hear the gospel.

Read before class: 2 Peter 3:8-14; Acts 1:6-8; Titus 2:11-14

B. Readiness You Can See (Amos 5:18-24)

B1. Israel longed for the day of the LORD, sure it would be a day of light for them, yet Amos warned it would be darkness. How can people look forward to God's coming while their lives are not ready for it? (Amos 5:18-20)

Added question, from Amos 5:18-24, one of the week's readings

Commentary

- "The common assumption among Israelites was that the Lord's foes and Israel's foes were one and the same. But Amos makes it clear that because the people have become God's enemies by refusing to heed the prophetic word, they too would experience the divine wrath on that fateful day." (NABRE note on Amos 5:18)
- "Nay, you say, but God is full of love to man, and none of these things will happen! Then it is written in vain!" (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 8 on First Thessalonians)
- "All those bridesmaids are there to welcome the bridegroom, that is, they want to meet him, just as we too desire a happy fulfilment of life: the difference between wisdom and foolishness is therefore not in goodwill." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2023)
- "We know that unfortunately it happens that we forget the purpose of our life, that is, the definitive appointment with God, thus losing the sense of expectation and making the present absolute." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 8, 2020)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "There are two kinds of presumption. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high), or he presumes upon God's almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit)." (CCC 2092)
- "Our attitude to our neighbour will disclose acceptance or refusal of grace and divine love." (CCC 678)

Summary

Israel assumed the day of the LORD would defeat their enemies, but Amos warned that by refusing to listen to God they had become his enemies too (NABRE note). People still tell themselves that God is too loving for any of his warnings to come true (Chrysostom). All ten bridesmaids wanted to meet the bridegroom, so the difference between them was not good will (Pope Francis). We can forget the purpose of our life, lose the sense of

expectation, and live only for the present (Pope Francis). One kind of presumption hopes for forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit (CCC 2092). How we treat our neighbor shows whether we have accepted or refused God's grace (CCC 678).

Deep Dive

Amos 5:18-24 is one of this week's readings. Amos asked, "What will the day of the LORD mean for you? It will be darkness, not light!" (Amos 5:18). He pictured someone who "fled from a lion and a bear met him," then made it home and "rested his hand against the wall, and a snake bit it" (Amos 5:19). Amos is the first to speak of the day of the LORD, and he turned his hearers' hopes upside down (NABRE note). Earlier in the chapter God pleads, "Seek me, that you may live" (Amos 5:4), and the prophet urges, "Seek good and not evil, that you may live" (Amos 5:14). Looking forward to his coming is right, but it should send us to examine our lives, not just our calendars.

Read before class: Amos 5:4-15; Amos 5:18-24; 2 Peter 3:8-14

B2. God turned away from Israel's feasts, offerings, and songs because justice and righteousness were missing. What does that say about worship that sounds right on Sunday while our dealings with people go wrong during the week? (Amos 5:21-23; also Matthew 5:23-24)

Added question, from Amos 5:18-24, one of the week's readings

Commentary

- "The prophet does not condemn cultic activity as such but rather the people's attempt to offer worship with hands unclean from oppression of their fellow Israelites" (NABRE note on Amos 5:21-27)
- "Through the Sinai covenant the love of God and the love of neighbor are inextricably bound together." (NABRE note on Amos 5:21-27)
- "For what is the profit, when His table indeed is full of golden cups, but He perishes with hunger?" (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 50 on Matthew)
- "Since God has no need at all of golden vessels, but of golden souls." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 50 on Matthew)
- "Faith, worship and ethos are interwoven as a single reality which takes shape in our encounter with God's agape." (Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est 14)
- "A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented." (Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est 14)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "The prophets of the Old Covenant often denounced sacrifices that were not from the heart or not coupled with love of neighbor." (CCC 2100)
- "To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren" (CCC 1397)

Summary

This is an application question. Common answers: going to Mass while holding a grudge, giving at church while ignoring a neighbor in need, cutting corners at work, gossiping on the way home from church, and treating worship as a performance. Amos did not condemn worship itself, but worship offered with hands unclean from oppressing others (NABRE note). Under the covenant, love of God and love of neighbor cannot be pulled apart (NABRE note). A table full of golden cups means little while Christ goes hungry in the poor (Chrysostom), because God wants golden souls more than golden vessels (Chrysostom). Faith, worship, and daily conduct form a single reality (Pope Benedict XVI), and a Eucharist that does not turn into concrete love is broken apart (Pope Benedict XVI). The prophets often condemned sacrifices that did not come from the heart or were not joined to love of neighbor (CCC 2100), and the Eucharist commits us to the poor (CCC 1397).

Deep Dive

God said, "I hate, I despise your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemnities" (Amos 5:21). He even said, "Take away from me your noisy songs" (Amos 5:23). Isaiah heard the same message: "To bring offerings is useless," and then, "learn to do good. Make justice your aim" (Isaiah 1:13, 17). Jesus said to leave a gift at the altar and "go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:24). God "has no need at all of golden vessels, but of golden souls" (Chrysostom). Worship is not the problem. Worship cut off from how we treat people is.

Read before class: Amos 5:21-24; Isaiah 1:13-17; Matthew 5:21-24

B3. Amos called for justice to surge like waters and righteousness like an unfailing stream. What would steady, everyday love, compassion, mercy, and service look like in our group as signs that we are ready for Christ? (Amos 5:24; also Micah 6:8; James 1:27)

Added question, from Amos 5:18-24, one of the week's readings

Commentary

- "The lamp is a symbol of the faith that illuminates our life, while the oil is a symbol of the charity that nourishes the light of faith, making it fruitful and credible." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2017)
- "If instead we are watchful and seek to do good, with acts of love, of sharing, of service to a neighbour in difficulty, then we can be at peace while we wait for the bridegroom to come" (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2017)
- "Faith inspires charity and charity safeguards faith." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2017)
- "They that sell are the poor, who, needing the alms of the faithful, made them that recompense which they desire, selling in return for the relief afforded to their wants, a consciousness of good works." (St. Hilary of Poitiers, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)
- "Do you see what great profit arises to us from the poor? Should you take them away, you would take away the great hope of our salvation." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 78 on Matthew)
- "The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word." (Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est 22)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities." (CCC 2447)
- "It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones." (CCC 2443)

Summary

This is an application question. Common answers: checking on members who are sick or grieving, bringing a meal, giving to someone in need, welcoming newcomers, visiting someone who is homebound, and keeping our word at home and at work. The lamp is faith, and the oil is the charity that keeps faith burning and makes it believable (Pope Francis). When we do good through love, sharing, and service, we can wait for the bridegroom in peace (Pope Francis). Faith inspires charity and charity protects faith (Pope Francis). The poor are the merchants who sell the oil (Hilary, quoted in the Catena Aurea), and taking them away would take away the great hope of our salvation (Chrysostom). The Church can no more neglect charity than she can neglect the sacraments and the Word (Pope Benedict XVI). The works of mercy help our neighbor in body and soul (CCC 2447), and Jesus will recognize his own by what they have done for the poor (CCC 2443).

Deep Dive

In the NABRE, Amos 5:24 reads, "Rather let justice surge like waters, and righteousness like an unfailing stream." The prophet is not rejecting worship; he is insisting that love of God and love of neighbor belong together (NABRE note). Micah sums up what God asks: "Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). James says pure religion is "to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:27). Later in the same chapter as the parable, Jesus says that whatever we did "for one of these least brothers of mine," we did for him (Matthew 25:40). Steady mercy is what readiness looks like from the outside.

Read before class: Micah 6:6-8; James 1:22-27; Matthew 25:31-40

C. Going Out to Welcome Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Matthew 25:6-10)

C1. When Paul says believers will meet the Lord in the air, he uses the same Greek word for "meeting" (apantesis) that Matthew uses for the bridesmaids going out to meet the bridegroom. It describes a welcome party that goes out to greet an honored guest and escort him back. How does that picture change the way you imagine Christ's return? (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; also Matthew 25:6; Acts 28:15)

Outline question 2, first part

Commentary

- "For when a king drives into a city, those who are in honor go out to meet him; but the condemned await the judge within." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 8 on First Thessalonians)
- "And as He descends, we go forth to meet Him, and, what is more blessed than all, so we shall be with Him." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 8 on First Thessalonians)
- "From the Latin verb here used, rapiemur, has come the idea of 'the rapture,' when believers will be transported away from the woes of the world" (NABRE note on 1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- "Nevertheless, the most important aspect of the parousia for him was the fulfillment of union with Christ." (NABRE note on 1 Thessalonians 4:15)
- "Suddenly thus, as on a stormy night, and when all think themselves secure, at the hour when sleep is the deepest, the coming of Christ shall be proclaimed by the shout of Angels, and the trumpets of the Powers that go before Him." (St. Jerome, as quoted

in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)

- "it is about those maiden brides who were designated to welcome and accompany the bridegroom to the wedding ceremony" (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2017)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "Indeed, the resurrection of the dead is closely associated with Christ's Parousia" (CCC 1001)
- "Though already present in his Church, Christ's reign is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled 'with power and great glory' by the King's return to earth." (CCC 671)

Summary

In the ancient world, people of honor went out to meet an arriving king, while the condemned waited inside (Chrysostom). As he comes down we go out to meet him, and best of all we will be with him (Chrysostom). The idea of a rapture comes from the Latin verb used in verse 17 (NABRE note), but for Paul the heart of Christ's coming was union with him (NABRE note). His coming will be announced suddenly, at the hour when sleep is deepest (Jerome, quoted in the Catena Aurea). The bridesmaids' job was to welcome the bridegroom and walk with him to the wedding (Pope Francis). The resurrection of the dead is closely tied to Christ's coming (CCC 1001), when his reign will be fulfilled by the King's return to earth (CCC 671). This picture turns his return into a royal welcome rather than an escape.

Deep Dive

Luke describes the same kind of meeting in Acts. When believers in Rome heard Paul was coming, they "came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us," and "On seeing them, Paul gave thanks to God and took courage" (Acts 28:15). In 1 Thessalonians the Lord comes down "with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Some Christians read verse 17 as a rapture that takes believers away from the world (NABRE note), while the Church reads it with the bodily resurrection at Christ's coming in glory (CCC 1001). Either way, the scene ends in reunion: "Thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Read before class: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Acts 28:13-16; Matthew 25:1-13

C2. The bridesmaids had one job: be ready to go out, light the way, and walk with the bridegroom to the feast. What might getting ready to welcome Jesus look like in our homes, our church, and our neighborhood? (Matthew 25:6-10; also Revelation 19:7)

Outline question 2, second part

Commentary

- "In Jesus' time it was customary for weddings to be celebrated at night; so the procession of guests took place with lit lamps." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 8, 2020)
- "Living is this: a great preparation for the day when we will be called to go to Jesus!" (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2023)
- "Not only for the final encounter, but also for the everyday great and small encounters, with a view to that encounter for which the lamp of faith is not enough; we also need the oil of charity and good works." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 8, 2020)
- "this parable relates to us all, that is, to the whole Church together, not to the Clergy only of whom we spoke yesterday; nor to the laity only; but generally to all." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "For now the Church is betrothed, and is to be led forth as a virgin to the marriage" (St. Augustine, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)
- "that on the vigil of Easter the people should not be dismissed before midnight, in expectation of Christ's coming" (St. Jerome, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "The Church is the spotless bride of the spotless Lamb." (CCC 796)
- "Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist she remembers this promise and turns her gaze 'to him who is to come.'" (CCC 1403)

Summary

This is an application question. Common answers: opening our homes, praying for the Church as Christ's bride, coming to Mass ready to welcome him, making peace in our families, inviting someone to church, and keeping our lamps burning through prayer and Scripture. Weddings in Jesus' day were held at night, so the guests walked in procession with lit lamps (Pope Francis). All of life is preparation for the day we are called to go to Jesus (Pope Francis), and that includes the small encounters of every day as well as the

final one (Pope Francis). The parable is about the whole Church, clergy and laity together (Augustine). The Church is now betrothed and will be led to the wedding like a bride (Augustine, quoted in the Catena Aurea). Early Christians kept the Easter Vigil until midnight, waiting for Christ's coming (Jerome, quoted in the Catena Aurea). The Church is the spotless bride of the spotless Lamb (CCC 796), and at every Eucharist she turns her gaze to him who is to come (CCC 1403).

Deep Dive

At midnight the cry went out: "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!" (Matthew 25:6). Those who were ready "went into the wedding feast with him" (Matthew 25:10). Paul describes Christ preparing his bride, "that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27). Revelation pictures the end as a wedding: "the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7). The Eucharist is already a foretaste of that feast (CCC 1402). The bridesmaids' job was to welcome the bridegroom and honor the bride, which is a good picture of a parish that welcomes people and cares for one another.

Read before class: Matthew 25:1-13; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:6-9

C3. Paul wrote these verses to comfort believers grieving loved ones who had died, and he told them to console one another with them. How does the hope of meeting the Lord together, and always being with him, change the way Christians grieve? (1 Thessalonians 4:18; also verses 13-15)

Added question, from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, the reading behind outline question 2

Commentary

- "On this point there is a clear difference between those who believe and those who do not believe or, one might likewise say, between those who hope and those who do not hope." (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, November 6, 2011)
- "There are many things which from ignorance alone cause us sorrow, so that if we come to understand them well, we banish our grief." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 7 on First Thessalonians)
- "Again, fallen asleep: he nowhere says, the dead." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 7 on First Thessalonians)
- "Each time we face our death, or that of a person who is dear, we feel that our faith is put to the test." (Pope Francis, General Audience, February 1, 2017)

- "It is wonderful: everything passes but, after death, we shall always be with the Lord." (Pope Francis, General Audience, February 1, 2017)
- "Who would not feel the need to convey to their departed loved ones a sign of kindness, a gesture of gratitude or even a request for pardon?" (Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi 48)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended." (CCC 1012, quoting the Roman Missal)
- "For even dead, we are not at all separated from one another, because we all run the same course and we will find one another again in the same place." (CCC 1690, quoting St. Simeon of Thessalonica)
- "Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective." (CCC 958)

Summary

Paul wrote as a pastor to people in grief. The dividing line is not between those who grieve and those who do not, but between those who hope and those who do not (Pope Benedict XVI). Much of our sorrow comes from not understanding, and understanding can drive the grief away (Chrysostom). Paul calls the faithful departed those who have fallen asleep, never simply the dead (Chrysostom). Every death of someone we love puts our faith to the test (Pope Francis), yet we will always be with the Lord (Pope Francis). Love reaches beyond death, and we long to give our departed loved ones a sign of kindness, thanks, or even a request for pardon (Pope Benedict XVI). For the faithful, life is changed, not ended (CCC 1012). Even in death we are not separated, because we run the same course and will find one another again (CCC 1690). Our prayer for the dead helps them and makes their prayer for us effective (CCC 958).

Deep Dive

Paul wrote so that believers "may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13). He did not forbid grief; he showed them how to grieve with hope (Pope Benedict XVI). That hope rests on Easter: "if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). Paul ends, "Therefore, console one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). The Church keeps praying for the faithful departed, especially at Mass (CCC 1032). Jesus promised, "I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be" (John 14:3).

Read before class: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

D. Looking Beyond the Flame (Matthew 25:1-13)

D1. All ten bridesmaids had lamps, all ten fell asleep, and all ten woke up and trimmed their lamps. The only difference was the reserve of oil. What do you think the oil stands for, and why could no one see the difference until midnight? (Matthew 25:1-5)

Added question, from Matthew 25:1-13 and the outline's sermon summary

Commentary

- "It is to be observed, that all have lamps, but all have not oil." (St. Gregory the Great, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)
- "Some great, some exceedingly great thing does this oil signify. Do you think that it is not charity?" (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "by oil, humanity, almsgiving, succor to them that are in need." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 78 on Matthew)
- "interpreted it as a symbol of love that one cannot purchase but receives as a gift, preserves within one and uses in works." (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, November 6, 2011, on St. Augustine and other ancient authors)
- "And what is one of the characteristics of the oil? That it cannot be seen: it is inside the lamps, it is not conspicuous, but without it, the lamps have no light." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2023)
- "where the two are distinguished by good deeds and lack of them, and such deeds may be signified by the oil of this parable." (NABRE note on Matthew 25:2-4)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "the symbolism of anointing with oil also signifies the Holy Spirit, to the point of becoming a synonym for the Holy Spirit." (CCC 695)
- "Charity is superior to all the virtues." (CCC 1826)

Summary

From the outside, all ten looked the same. All have lamps, but not all have oil (Gregory the Great, quoted in the Catena Aurea). The oil may well mean charity, which rises above everything else the way oil floats on top of water (Augustine). Ancient writers read it as love, a gift that cannot be bought but is received, kept, and used in good works (Pope

Benedict XVI). The oil can also be read as kindness, almsgiving, and help to people in need (Chrysostom). The contrast echoes the wise and foolish builders, who differ by their good deeds, and those deeds may be what the oil means (NABRE note). Oil cannot be seen; it is inside the lamp, yet without it there is no light (Pope Francis). Anointing with oil is such a strong sign of the Holy Spirit that it became another name for him (CCC 695), and charity is the greatest of the virtues (CCC 1826).

Deep Dive

At Mass, Matthew 25:1-13 was the Gospel for the Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A (November 8, 2026), with Wisdom 6:12-16 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (USCCB). The first reading says Wisdom "is readily perceived by those who love her," and "one who watches for her at dawn will not be disappointed" (Wisdom 6:12, 14). In the parable, "the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps" (Matthew 25:4). "Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep" (Matthew 25:5), so sleep itself was not the fault (Pope Francis). Jesus also told his followers, "your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:16).

Read before class: Matthew 25:1-13; Wisdom 6:12-16; Matthew 5:14-16

D2. A lamp can keep burning for a while even as its oil runs low. Where could a full calendar of serving, attending, and helping be covering up tiredness or dryness in your soul, and what early warning signs should we watch for in ourselves and each other? (Matthew 25:1-13; also Galatians 6:9)

Outline question 3, first part

Commentary

- "It means not falling into the trap of activism, but devoting time to the Lord, to listening to his Word." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2023)
- "An inner life cannot be improvised, it is not a matter of a moment, of once in a while, of once and for all." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2023)
- "And so when men begin to leave off their praises, the lamps fail." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "These virgins who complain that their lamps are gone out, shew that they are partially alight, yet have they not an unfailing light, nor enduring works." (St. Jerome, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)

- "our lamps flicker amid the winds and temptations of this life; but only let our flame burn strongly, that the wind of temptation may increase the fire, rather than put it out." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "a form of depression due to lax ascetical practice, decreasing vigilance, carelessness of heart." (CCC 2733, on acedia)
- "lukewarmness is hesitation or negligence in responding to divine love; it can imply refusal to give oneself over to the prompting of charity." (CCC 2094)
- "To overcome these obstacles, we must battle to gain humility, trust, and perseverance." (CCC 2728)

Summary

This is an application question. Common answers: serving on every committee while skipping prayer, going through the motions at Mass, growing irritable, losing joy, avoiding Scripture and confession, and hiding struggles behind a smile. Wisdom means not falling into the trap of activism but making time for the Lord and his Word (Pope Francis). An inner life cannot be improvised or tended once in a while (Pope Francis). When people stop praising what we do, a lamp fed only by praise goes out (Augustine). The foolish bridesmaids' lamps were still partly lit, but they lacked a light that would last (Jerome, quoted in the Catena Aurea). Our lamps flicker in the winds of temptation, but a strong flame lets the wind make the fire bigger (Augustine). One warning sign is acedia, a slump that comes from lax habits, fading vigilance, and a careless heart (CCC 2733). Lukewarmness is hesitating or neglecting to respond to God's love (CCC 2094), and the answer is to fight for humility, trust, and perseverance (CCC 2728).

Deep Dive

The foolish bridesmaids noticed the problem only when they said, "our lamps are going out" (Matthew 25:8). Jesus praised the church in Ephesus for its labor and endurance, yet told it, "you have lost the love you had at first" (Revelation 2:4). Paul encourages, "Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). Isaiah promises that "They that hope in the LORD will renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31). The spiritual writers name the slow fading of zeal acedia and treat it as a call to vigilance (CCC 2733). Busy service is good, but it cannot take the place of time with the one who fills the lamp.

Read before class: Revelation 2:1-5; Galatians 6:7-10; Isaiah 40:28-31

D3. When the foolish bridesmaids asked to borrow oil, the wise said there would not be enough for both. Why can't readiness be borrowed from someone else's faith, and what does the bridegroom's "I do not know you" teach about the relationship each of us needs with him? (Matthew 25:8-12; also Matthew 7:21-23)

Added question, from Matthew 25:8-12

Commentary

- "That no man can protect us there, if we are betrayed by our works, not because he will not, but because he cannot." (St. John Chrysostom, Homily 78 on Matthew)
- "Wherefore, each man shall receive the recompense of his own works, and the virtues of one cannot atone for the vices of another in the day of judgment." (St. Jerome, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)
- "This was not spoken in any lack of hope, but in a sober and godly humility." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "Their worthy confession calling Him, 'Lord, Lord,' is a mark of faith. But what avails it to confess with the mouth Him whom you deny with your works?" (St. Jerome, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)
- "What then is, I know you not? I refuse, I reject you." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him." (CCC 1033)
- "In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit." (CCC 2565)

Summary

Readiness is personal. No one can protect us on that day if our own works betray us, not because they will not but because they cannot (Chrysostom). Each person receives the reward of his own works, and one person's virtues cannot make up for another's faults (Jerome, quoted in the Catena Aurea). The wise did not refuse out of stinginess but out of sober humility, since even a good conscience trembles before the Judge (Augustine). Calling him Lord, Lord is a sign of faith, but it is empty if our works deny him (Jerome, quoted in the Catena Aurea). The bridegroom's words mean that he refuses and rejects them (Augustine). We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him (CCC 1033), and prayer is a living relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (CCC 2565).

Deep Dive

The wise answered, "No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves" (Matthew 25:9). Their answer came from humility, not stinginess (Augustine). When the others came back they cried, "Lord, Lord, open the door for us!" (Matthew 25:11). The answer echoes the Sermon on the Mount: "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" (Matthew 7:21). Jesus the good shepherd says, "I know mine and mine know me" (John 10:14). Friends can pray for us and walk with us, but no one can know Jesus for us.

Read before class: Matthew 25:8-13; Matthew 7:21-27; John 10:11-15

E. Trimming the Wick (Matthew 25:7)

E1. The sermon compares confession to trimming the wick, and asking for Christ's transforming presence to receiving fresh oil. What would trimming your wick look like this week, and where do you most need fresh oil from the Holy Spirit? (Matthew 25:7; also 1 John 1:9)

Outline question 3, second part

Commentary

- "To confess one's past sins to God daily in prayer with sighs and tears, and to amend them for the future." (Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 4)
- "Convert today! Change your life today!" (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 8, 2020)
- "The lamps of the senses are trimmed by evangelical and right use of them; and they that use their senses amiss have their lamps untrimmed." (Origen, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)
- "They 'trimmed their lamps,' that is, prepared to give an account of their deeds." (St. Augustine, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25)
- "only the awareness that we are sinners forgiven by God's infinite mercy can enable us to carry out concrete gestures of fraternal reconciliation." (Pope Francis, Angelus, July 24, 2016)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit." (CCC 1458)
- "Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right, by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness." (CCC 1435)
- "Reconciliation with God is thus the purpose and effect of this sacrament." (CCC 1468)

Summary

This is an application question. Common answers: going to confession, a nightly examination of conscience, making amends with someone, cutting out a habit that dims the flame, and asking the Spirit to fill us each morning. The old monastic rule asks for daily confession of sins to God in prayer, with a resolve to amend them (Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 4). The call is to convert today, not tomorrow (Pope Francis). The lamps of the senses are trimmed by using them rightly (Origen, quoted in the Catena Aurea). In the parable, trimming the lamps meant getting ready to give an account of one's deeds (Augustine, quoted in the Catena Aurea). Only knowing we are forgiven sinners lets us make real gestures of reconciliation (Pope Francis). Regular confession of everyday faults helps us form our conscience, fight evil tendencies, and grow in the life of the Spirit (CCC 1458). Conversion also happens in daily life through reconciliation, concern for the poor, examination of conscience, and spiritual direction (CCC 1435), and the sacrament restores us to God's friendship (CCC 1468).

Deep Dive

When the cry came, "all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps" (Matthew 25:7). John promises, "If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing" (1 John 1:9). James adds, "confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16). On Easter evening Jesus breathed on the apostles and said, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them" (John 20:22-23), giving them his own power to forgive sins (CCC 976). David prayed, "A clean heart create for me, God; renew within me a steadfast spirit" (Psalm 51:12). Confession clears away what has burned out so the flame can burn clean again.

Read before class: 1 John 1:5-9; John 20:19-23; Psalm 51:12-14

E2. Picture Jesus sitting down across the table from you for coffee. What would you bring him first: a struggle, a joy, a sin, or a longing to be more like him? Why is honest, unhurried time with him where the oil gets replenished? (also Revelation 3:20)

Added question, from the outline's sermon summary (coffee with Jesus)

Commentary

- "This means knowing how to stop and listen to one's heart, to keep watch over one's own thoughts and feelings." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2023)
- "Inner life has to be prepared by dedicating a little time every day, with constancy, as one does for every important thing." (Pope Francis, Angelus, November 12, 2023)
- "It is a dialogue between people who love each other, a dialogue based on trust, sustained by listening and open to a commitment to solidarity." (Pope Francis, Angelus, July 28, 2019)
- "And let us be assured that it is not in many words, but in the purity of heart and tears of compunction that we are heard." (Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 20)
- "Multiplied words are one thing, long-continued warmth of desire is another." (St. Augustine, Letter 130 to Proba)
- "Christ invites all to the messianic banquet in heaven" (NABRE note on Revelation 3:20)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us." (CCC 2709, quoting St. Teresa of Avila)
- "Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him." (CCC 2560)
- "One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter." (CCC 2710)

Summary

This is an application question. Common answers: bringing worries about family or health, thanking him for a recent answer to prayer, confessing something we have avoided, sitting with him in adoration, or simply asking to know him better. Caring for the inner life means learning to stop, listen to our heart, and keep watch over our thoughts and feelings (Pope Francis), and it takes a little time every day (Pope Francis). Christian prayer is a dialogue between people who love each other, built on trust and listening (Pope Francis). We are

heard because of a pure heart, not because of many words (Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 20), and many words are not the same as lasting desire (Augustine). Prayer is taking time to be alone with the one who we know loves us (CCC 2709, quoting St. Teresa of Avila). Prayer is where God's thirst meets ours (CCC 2560), and we make time for it rather than waiting until we have time (CCC 2710).

Deep Dive

Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," and to anyone who opens, "I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). He spoke those words to a lukewarm church, and the meal points ahead to the banquet of heaven (NABRE note). When Martha was "burdened with much serving," Jesus told her, "Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her" (Luke 10:40, 42). The psalm at Mass on November 8 prays, "I think of you upon my bed, I remember you through the watches of the night" (Psalm 63:7). Time at his table is not a reward for being ready; it is how we get ready.

Read before class: Revelation 3:14-22; Luke 10:38-42; Psalm 63:2-9

E3. The sermon says a life of devotion cannot be kept going by determination alone. Why do willpower and good intentions eventually run dry, and what does it look like to rely on the Holy Spirit instead? (also Zechariah 4:6; Ephesians 5:18)

Added question, from the outline's sermon summary (devotion takes more than determination)

Commentary

- "Men can put oil into their vessels, but they cannot create the olive." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "For you have no oil of your own self." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)
- "holding that the actual good which is in them cannot be done by themselves, but by the Lord, they praise the Lord working in them" (Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue)
- "And this love is a gift of Christ, poured out in us by the Holy Spirit." (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, November 6, 2011)
- "We need him to live well, to live with wisdom and love, doing God's will." (Pope Francis, Angelus, July 24, 2016, on the Holy Spirit)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "The preparation of man for the reception of grace is already a work of grace." (CCC 2001)

- "Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with God who works, for his mercy has gone before us." (CCC 2001, quoting St. Augustine)
- "The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1830)
- "Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part." (CCC 2725)

Summary

Willpower runs out because it depends on us. People can put oil into their lamps, but they cannot create the olive (Augustine), and no one has oil of his own (Augustine). The good in us is the Lord's work, and we praise him for it (Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue). Love is Christ's gift, poured out in us by the Holy Spirit (Pope Benedict XVI). We need the Spirit to live well, with wisdom and love, doing God's will (Pope Francis). Even our preparation to receive grace is already a work of grace (CCC 2001), and our work is a collaboration with God, whose mercy goes before us (CCC 2001, quoting St. Augustine). The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1830), and prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part (CCC 2725).

Deep Dive

God told Zerubbabel, "Not by might, and not by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). Paul writes, "do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). The fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23), and fruit grows from life inside, not from effort alone. Paul adds, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). Confirmation increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us for exactly this kind of life (CCC 1303). Determination still matters, but it is meant to follow the Spirit, not replace him.

Read before class: Zechariah 4:1-6; Ephesians 5:15-21; Galatians 5:22-25

F. Asking the One Who Supplies (Luke 11:9-13)

F1. The One who expects to find oil in our lamps is also the One who supplies it. How does that change the way you answer the call to be ready: with anxious striving, or with trust and asking? (Luke 11:9-10; also Philippians 1:6)

Outline question 4, first part

Commentary

- "But He would not so encourage us to ask were He not willing to give. Let human slothfulness blush, He is more willing to give than we to receive." (St. Augustine, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Luke 11)
- "how much more kindly will He give who never sleeps, and who rouses us from sleep that we may ask from Him." (St. Augustine, Letter 130 to Proba)
- "He knows our needs better than we do ourselves, but he wants us to present them to him boldly and persistently, because this is our way of participating in his work of salvation." (Pope Francis, Angelus, July 24, 2016)
- "In being persistent with God, we don't need to convince him, but to strengthen our faith and our patience" (Pope Francis, Angelus, July 24, 2016)
- "In the first place, beg of Him by most earnest prayer, that He perfect whatever good thou dost begin" (Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue)
- "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you; but now when it is the time of mercy, not when it is the time of judgment." (St. Augustine, Sermon 93, on Matthew 25:1-13)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "To the one who prays like this, the heavenly Father will 'give whatever he needs,' and above all the Holy Spirit who contains all gifts." (CCC 2613)
- "Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1817)

Summary

This is an application question. If the supply depends on us, readiness turns into anxious striving. If it comes from him, readiness means coming back again and again to ask. God would not urge us to ask if he did not want to give, and he is more willing to give than we are to receive (Augustine, quoted in the Catena Aurea). The sleepy friend in the parable gave in the end, so how much more will God give, who never sleeps (Augustine). God knows our needs, but he wants us to bring them boldly and persistently (Pope Francis), and persistence strengthens our faith and patience rather than changing his mind (Pope Francis). Before any good work, the first step is to beg God in earnest prayer to bring it to completion (Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue). Now is the time to knock, while it is still the time of mercy (Augustine). To those who pray like this, the Father gives above all the Holy Spirit (CCC 2613), and hope relies on the Spirit's grace, not on our own strength (CCC 1817).

Deep Dive

Luke 11:9-13 is the fourth reading on this week's outline. Jesus said, "ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9). Just before, he told of a friend who knocked at midnight and received what he needed "because of his persistence" (Luke 11:8). Paul is confident "that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). Jesus also told a parable "about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary" (Luke 18:1). The one who calls us to be ready is the one who keeps the lamp filled.

Read before class: Luke 11:5-13; Luke 18:1-8; Philippians 1:3-6

F2. Jesus says even a flawed earthly father would never hand his hungry child a snake or a scorpion. Why do we sometimes hesitate to ask God for more of his Spirit, and what does "how much more" tell us about his heart toward us? (Luke 11:11-13)

Added question, from Luke 11:11-13

Commentary

- "shows that the Holy Spirit is the fullness of God's gifts, since all the advantages which are received from the grace of God's gifts flow from that source." (St. Bede, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Luke 11)
- "For oftentimes we rashly, from the impulse of pleasure, give way to hurtful desires. When we ask any such thing from God, we shall not obtain it." (St. Cyril of Alexandria, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Luke 11)
- "His gifts are very great, but we are small and straitened in our capacity of receiving." (St. Augustine, Letter 130 to Proba)
- "Among these, there is one, the great important thing that Jesus speaks of in today's Gospel, which we almost never ask for, and that is the Holy Spirit." (Pope Francis, Angelus, July 24, 2016)
- "Luke presents the gift of the holy Spirit as the response of the Father to the prayer of the Christian disciple." (NABRE note on Luke 11:13)
- "As we ask, we open our hand to receive; to receive the gifts that the Father has shown us in his Son." (Pope Francis, Angelus, July 28, 2019)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "Do not be troubled if you do not immediately receive from God what you ask him; for he desires to do something even greater for you, while you cling to him in prayer." (CCC 2737, quoting Evagrius Ponticus)

- "God wills that our desire should be exercised in prayer, that we may be able to receive what he is prepared to give." (CCC 2737, quoting St. Augustine)
- "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love." (CCC 2671)

Summary

This is an application question. Common reasons for hesitating: feeling unworthy, fearing what the Spirit might change, past disappointment, or thinking we should manage on our own. The Holy Spirit is the fullness of God's gifts, the source of every other grace (Bede, quoted in the Catena Aurea). God will not grant a request that comes from a harmful desire, just as a father will not give his child something harmful to eat (Cyril, quoted in the Catena Aurea). His gifts are great, but our capacity to receive is small (Augustine). The Holy Spirit is the great gift we almost never ask for (Pope Francis). Luke shows the Spirit as the Father's answer to his disciples' prayer (NABRE note), and as we ask, we open our hands to receive (Pope Francis). God may delay because he wants to give us something even greater while we cling to him (CCC 2737, quoting Evagrius Ponticus), and he stretches our desire in prayer so we can receive what he is ready to give (CCC 2737, quoting St. Augustine).

Deep Dive

Jesus asked, "What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish?" (Luke 11:11). Then he drew the conclusion: "how much more will the Father in heaven give the holy Spirit to those who ask him?" (Luke 11:13). In Matthew's version the promise is "good things" (Matthew 7:11), and Luke names the gift that contains all the others (CCC 2613). Paul says "the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). At Pentecost Peter told the crowd, "the promise is made to you and to your children" (Acts 2:39). The Father is not reluctant. He is waiting to be asked.

Read before class: Luke 11:9-13; Matthew 7:7-11; Acts 2:38-39

F3. The sermon calls each believer to live as a "little Christ." Name one specific thing you long for the Holy Spirit to grow in you so you can live that calling more fully, and how can we pray boldly for one another this week? (Luke 11:13; also Galatians 5:22-23)

Outline question 4, second part, including prayer for one another

Commentary

- "What a beautiful prayer it would be if, this week, each of us were to ask the Father: 'Father, give me the Holy Spirit!'" (Pope Francis, Angelus, July 24, 2016)
- "Therefore, O covetous man, what seek you? or if you seek any thing else, what will suffice you to whom the Lord is not sufficient?" (St. Augustine, as quoted in St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Luke 11)
- "For, in proportion to the simplicity of our faith, the firmness of our hope, and the ardour of our desire, will we more largely receive of that which is immensely great" (St. Augustine, Letter 130 to Proba)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "through the anointing of his Spirit who flows from the head to the members, he makes us other 'Christs.'" (CCC 2782)
- "This anointing highlights the name 'Christian,' which means 'anointed' and derives from that of Christ himself whom God 'anointed with the Holy Spirit.'" (CCC 1289)
- "Let us rejoice then and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ himself." (CCC 795, quoting St. Augustine)
- "The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory." (CCC 1832)

Summary

This is an application question. Common answers: more love and patience at home, boldness to speak about Jesus, freedom from a stubborn habit, peace in anxiety, wisdom for a decision, and gifts to serve the group. Each of us could pray this week, "Father, give me the Holy Spirit!" (Pope Francis). Nothing else will satisfy someone for whom the Lord is not enough (Augustine, quoted in the Catena Aurea). The simpler our faith, the firmer our hope, and the stronger our desire, the more we receive (Augustine). Through the anointing of his Spirit, God makes us other Christs (CCC 2782), and the name Christian itself means anointed (CCC 1289). We can rejoice that we have become not only Christians but Christ himself (CCC 795, quoting St. Augustine). The fruits of the Spirit are the first fruits of eternal glory (CCC 1832). Close by praying for one another by name, and add the Church's simple prayer, "Come, Holy Spirit" (CCC 2671).

Deep Dive

Jesus promised that from whoever believes in him, "Rivers of living water will flow from within him," and John explains, "He said this in reference to the Spirit" (John 7:38-39). Paul says we "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18). In Antioch "the disciples were first called

Christians" (Acts 11:26), a name that means anointed (CCC 1289). When we do not know how to pray, "the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness" (Romans 8:26). Being specific in prayer is not greedy. It takes Jesus at his word.

Read before class: John 7:37-39; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Romans 8:26-27

Sources

Source	Where to find it
Catechism of the Catholic Church, cited by paragraph number (CCC)	vatican.va
St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Matthew 25 (quotes St. Gregory the Great, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Hilary of Poitiers, and Origen)	CCEL
St. Thomas Aquinas, Catena Aurea on Luke 11 (quotes St. Augustine, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Bede)	isidore.co
St. Augustine, Sermon 93 on the ten virgins (Sermon 43 on the New Testament) and Letter 130 to Proba	Sermon 93, Letter 130
St. John Chrysostom, Homilies 50 and 78 on Matthew and Homilies 7 and 8 on First Thessalonians	Homily 50, Homily 78, Homily 7, Homily 8
Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi and Deus Caritas Est	Spe Salvi, Deus Caritas Est
Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus on Matthew 25:1-13, November 6, 2011	vatican.va
Pope Francis, Angelus on Matthew 25:1-13, November 12, 2017; November 8, 2020; and November 12, 2023	2017, 2020, 2023
Pope Francis, Angelus on Luke 11:1-13, July 24, 2016, and July 28, 2019	2016, 2019
Pope Francis, General Audience on Christian hope, February 1, 2017	vatican.va

Source	Where to find it
Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue and Chapters 4 and 20	CCEL
New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE), text and footnotes	Bible Gateway, USCCB
USCCB Mass readings, Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, November 8, 2026	USCCB