

Fr Ben's Weekly Reflection

32nd Sunday Ordinary Time

Nov 8, 2026

What Are We Preparing For?

November is a loaded month and really feels like the "build-up" month to the Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, New Years time-warp. The "preparation creep" to-do lists for these things gets earlier and earlier. Cue also the obligatory "let's pause and give thanks", "count your blessings," and "Jesus is the reason for the season." Those reminders themselves just become morphed into the rest of the preparation stream. We feel it. In a way, "be prepared" starts to feel less like a good thing and more like Scar's menacing "Be Prepared" villain song from the Lion King.

Liturgically, November readings are preparing too, and we get the first one this weekend: the five wise and five foolish virgins. Rather than doom, the purpose of the preparation is to enter the wedding feast. It's a joyful event. Be prepared! Stay awake! The hour isn't known.

Both the wise and foolish fall asleep since that is basic human nature. No fault there. But the wise know that like the phrase "this will only take a couple minutes" means it's going to be an hour-long conversation, the bridegroom probably isn't coming on time.

What are we preparing for? In the Church, we are building up toward the end of our liturgical year and liturgical new year. The end is the Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. November is focused on the second coming or the end of our lives at death, whichever comes first. Jesus Christ, King of the Universe is there at the end no matter what. But again, this is not doom, but the arrival of the bridegroom. His arrival, if we are prepared, is a joyful occasion.

We think about death at Halloween with skeletons and spooks, and death is scary to think about. However, we know it is going to happen. We aren't going to live forever. Using this time to prepare our lives is what this time is for. The most powerful example of this is conversion.

Conversion means change, or turning, from one way of life to another. A foolish life is living without thinking about our actions. Preparing asks: "Is this a good, moral choice that leads me to relationship with Jesus Christ and the Will of the King or is this my will? Will this lead me to heaven…or the other place?" Since we are not good judges of our own actions, being prepared is taking the advice from the wise and prudent. These are the Saints, the Church, the Scripture, our bishops, the pope, and other religious leaders who are seeking the welcome the King and Bridegroom.

Conversion happens daily if we choose it. It isn't always dramatic, but we need to prepare. That can be one thing to cross off our preparation to-do list.