Be Sure Your Light’s Shining

By Dr. John Smarrelli, Jr.
President, Christian Brothers University

Strolling through the CBU campus, I find an atmosphere so different from what I viewed just a few short months ago. After 12 weeks of hard study and college life, I see students, particularly seniors, who appear stressed, wondering if they can survive the next month and make it through final exams, projects, and papers. What happened to that August zeal when the excitement was so palpable? Given all of the demands on our students, juggling all that needs to be done can be tough. Adding, the shortening days and cooler temperatures during this month, finding time to enjoy a few hours of sunshine even becomes a challenge.

As we move through the liturgical year and come to its close at the end of this month, a familiar theme to the one felt on the CBU campus resonates throughout the scripture readings during the past few weeks. Jesus Christ’s resurrection seems to be a forgotten memory, the birth of Jesus so far away (except at Hallmark), and the fear of darkness and the need to be prepared for the unknown so pervasive. Recall the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom forgot to prepare for a late arriving groom and winded up in darkness and shut out from the celebration. This was a parable that ended with the powerful words:

“So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.”

The following Sunday of the liturgical calendar, we are confronted with the parable of a King leaving town and giving his servants a different number of talents (coins) for which they needed to manage. The individual who was given only one coin decided to bury it for fear that he would lose it. When the King returned, his response was quite dramatic:

“For this good-for-nothing servant, throw him into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.”

So, with November’s increased darkness, how do we keep our lamps lit and remain prepared? Each parable contains a very simple but profound lesson for us. The parable of the virgins tells us to always be prepared by keeping oil in our lamps so that we don’t miss the celebration. Just as I expect our students not to wait for final exams to study, in the same way we should not postpone our preparations for the coming of Jesus Christ, as we do not know the day or the hour that he will come. The second parable makes it clear how we must prepare; by using the gifts that have been given to us by God. If we use those talents to do good, God will increase them. If we choose to bury those talents, ultimately the darkness will take hold of our lives.

Students who have used their talents and are prepared for exams will be rewarded at the end of the semester with good grades. Similarly, if we follow Jesus, we will be rewarded like the good servants as described in the parable. To enter the celebration, we must be prepared with a lamp full of oil and have fully used our talents. If we are faithful in the little things, God will tell us when we see him:

“Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master’s happiness.”

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from 9-12 for a day of Spiritual Formation with Fr. Nieli and
Father Ben: “The Mystery of Guadalupe.”
If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Kristin Walker at 901-331-6445
Please visit http://www.pilgrimages.com/pilgrimsplace
for more information or email: pilgrimsplace7@gmail.com

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LECTIONARY READINGS
Year A of the Sunday Cycle
November 20-26, 2011

LITURGY OF THE HOURS
Psalter Week II

Sunday, November 20
Our Lord Jesus Christ the King
Last Sunday of Ordinary Time
Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17
Psalm 23:1-3,5-6
1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28
Matthew 25:31-46

Monday, November 21
The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Daniel 1:1-6,8-20
(PSALM) Daniel 3:52-56
Luke 21:1-4

Tuesday, November 22
Cecilia, virgin, martyr
Daniel 2:31-45
(PSALM) Daniel 3:57-61
Luke 21:5-11

Wednesday, November 23
Clement I, pope, martyr;
Columbanus, abbot; Blessed
Miguel Agustin Pro, priest,
martyr
Daniel 5:1-6,13-14,16-17,23-28
(PSALM) Daniel 3:62-67

Thursday, November 24
Andree Dung-Lac, priest,
martyr, and his companions,
martyrs
Daniel 6:12-28
(PSALM) Daniel 3:68-74

Thanksgiving Day is observed today (USA)
Sirach 50:22-24
Psalm 138:1-5
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Luke 17:11-19

Friday, November 25
Weekday: Catherine of
Alexandria, virgin, martyr
Daniel 7:2-14
(PSALM) Daniel 3:75-81
Luke 21:29-33

Saturday, November 26
Weekday
Daniel 7:15-27
(PSALM) Daniel 3:82-87