

**GOSPEL PEARLS**

## Faithfully following Jesus

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*Jesus said to his disciples: "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For 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, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be*

*enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour (Matthew 25: 1-13)*

The decision to follow Jesus faithfully must be taken freely by each one of us. The oil of faith that lights the lamp of our hearts cannot be bought from others, but must be asked as a gift from God and cultivated every day. The foolish virgins represent those who have led a good life more to be praised by mankind (the oil sellers, symbol of men's approval) than out of gratitude for the gifts received from God. The sleep that overcomes the virgins during the night represents death and the conversation with the bridegroom is the judgement to which we will all be subjected. At that moment, the oil of mankind's interested praise will have no weight, but rather the salvation we seek instead. Our desire for salvation will only be realised if God claims to know us. Are you ready to meet the Lord who today might ask you to account for your life in order to save your soul or condemn it permanently to the pains of hell?