Today is Friday the 28 August, the feast of St Augustine, in the 21st week of Ordinary Time.

The monks of Keur Moussa sing: ‘Lord Jesus, we await your coming in faith, more sure of seeing your day than a watchman awaiting the dawn.’

Today’s reading is from the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 25:1-13

‘Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps & went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, & 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 & slept. But at midnight there was a shout, “Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” Then all those bridesmaids got up & 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 & for us; you had better go to the dealers & buy some for yourselves.” & while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, & those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; & 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.

Today’s Gospel story about a small oil crisis in the Middle East tells us of five bridesmaids who are described as foolish because they were not prepared for what happened next... Wisdom is the key. The wisdom of the five wise bridesmaids is in doing what was expected of them, in being prepared for the arrival of the bridegroom. Their wisdom wasn’t extraordinary. It was eminently practical. Am I wise or foolish? Or am I a bit of both, depending on the circumstances?

Within us, we each have a wise person and we all have a foolish person. The fourteenth-century mystic Meister Eckhart said:“Wisdom consists in doing the next thing you have to do, doing it with your whole heart, and finding delight in doing it.” What is the next thing the Lord might be asking of you today?

Let us listen again.
What do you want to say to the Lord? You might like to spend these last few moments asking for the gift of wisdom, or perhaps talk to God about something else this reflection has stirred in you...

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.