

THE ELEOS PROJECT



PREPARING FOR THE BRIDEGROOM

Lighting an oil lamp is one of the most ancient Christian practices. From the time of Christ until today Christians have traditionally lit an oil lamp as a way of preparing themselves to meet Christ. An oil lamp is also called a vigil lamp. The word vigil is defined as a period of keeping awake during the time usually spent asleep, especially to keep watch or pray.

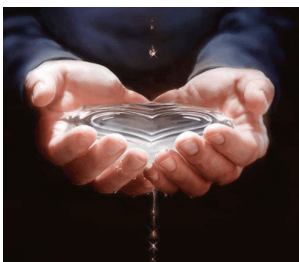
In the Bible Jesus tells the story of ten virgins who took oil lamps and went out to wait for a very special person, The Bridegroom. Five of them brought enough oil with them to make it through the long night. When The Bridegroom arrived their lamps were lit and they went into a banquet to celebrate.

The story of The Bridegroom is told in the 25th Chapter of Matthew's Gospel, verses 1-13. We read this story at the start of Holy Week and with it we sing a special hymn and process a special icon called The Bridegroom comes in watching, unworthy is be not weighed down wherefore arose thyself God, through the save us.



Behold The the middle of the night and blessed is the servant whom He shall find the one whom He shall find heedless beware therefore O my soul and with sleep, lest you be given over to death and shut out of the kingdom, and cry, holy, holy, holy art Thou O our intercessions of the Theotokos, Savior

The word in Greek for olive oil is "eleon" and the word for mercy in Greek is "eleos." When we think about the parable of the Ten Virgins and The Bridegroom, an obvious connection should be made between these two words. The parable is asking us to consider whether or not our vigil lamps will have enough oil in them to make it through the night. Will we be ready to meet Christ at the end of our lives and and enter into heaven?



The key question is how do we fill our lamps? Filling our lamps is not an easy task and it doesn't happen all at once. Instead we fill our lamps, drop by drop, by one act of mercy and one act of love at a time.

The Eleos Project is an opportunity to prepare ourselves this Great Lent to meet The Bridegroom. Here is how it works, place an empty vigil lamp at your prayer corner or in a central place of your home like the dinner table. Beside it have a reservoir of olive oil.

Attempt to fill your lamp throughout Great Lent by practicing acts of mercy and love. Drop by drop as your vigil lamp fills you will be preparing yourself to meet The Bridegroom. Come the start of Holy Week we hope that all of us will be ready to light our lamps in preparation for the coming of The Bridegroom and our entry into His Kingdom.