

# Gospel of Matthew

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## ***Suggested responses to questions about Matthew 25:1-46***

**Note: Be sure to respond to all the questions yourself before reading the suggested responses in order to make the most of this study.**

1. The Church understands the coming of Jesus Christ to be an eternal reality that's manifested in many ways. Jesus Christ comes to his followers through all of the sacraments. He comes as the bridegroom to his bride the Church. He comes to individuals through other people. He comes through Scripture. And he comes supremely in the sacrament of the Eucharist. The variety of ways in which Jesus comes can be viewed not only as a sign of his ultimate second coming at the end of time, but as a sign of his coming for each person at his or her individual hour of death.
2. Paragraph 762 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that the present time of waiting and watching is “the time of the Spirit and of witness, but also a time still marked by ‘distress’ and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching.”
3. In the parable about the 10 maidens, Jesus is the bridegroom and the Church is his bride. John 2:1-11 describes Jesus’ performing the sign of changing water into wine at the marriage in Cana in Galilee. In his vision of heaven recorded in Revelation 19:9, the apostle John is instructed to write: “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Paragraph 1612 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “The nuptial covenant between God and his people Israel had prepared the way for the new and everlasting covenant in which the Son of God, by becoming incarnate and giving his life, has united to himself in a certain way all mankind saved by him, thus preparing for ‘the wedding feast of the Lamb.’”
4. The unprepared maidens are described as lacking enough oil for their lamps, and the early Church fathers understood that the oil represents the Holy Spirit. The very word Christ means “anointed one.” The sacramental life of the Church always has associated the gift of the Holy Spirit with oil of anointing. Christians are anointed as part of the liturgical rites connected with the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders.
5. Paragraph 1936 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that “talents” are differences tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, as well as the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth. Paragraph 1937 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “These differences belong to God’s plan, who wills that each receive what he needs from others, and that those endowed with particular ‘talents’ share the benefits with those who need them. These differences encourage and often oblige persons to practice generosity, kindness, and sharing of goods.”

### **Matthew Lesson 25 Suggested Responses**

6. In Matthew 25:25, the servant explains that he hid his master's talent in the ground because he was afraid. In Matthew 25:26, the master accuses the servant of being "wicked and slothful." In the parable, the servant who fails to use the talent he's been given has it taken away and the servant himself is cast into outer darkness.
7. In the parable about the sheep and the goats, the sheep are distinguished from the goats because the sheep saw Jesus hungry and gave him food, saw him thirsty and gave him drink, saw him a stranger and welcomed him, saw him naked and clothed him, saw him sick and visited him, and saw him in prison and came to him. The goats are those who failed to come to the aid of those in need.
8. In Matthew 25:34, Jesus says that the sheep will be greeted by the King who will say to them: "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." In Matthew 25:41, Jesus says that the goats will be told by the King: "Depart from me you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Paragraph 1038 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that "the resurrection of the dead, 'of both the just and unjust,' will precede the Last Judgment."
9. Paragraph 2447 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: "The *works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God."
10. In Matthew 25:41, when Jesus speaks about "the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels," he's describing hell. In paragraph 1033 and in the Glossary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, hell is defined as a "state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed." It's reserved for those who refuse by their own free choice to believe and be converted from sin, even to the end of their lives.

*Responses to the Questions for Reflection will vary.*