



33rd Sunday Ord. Time Yr A

Lectio Divina

Lectio: In this Sunday's parable, the Parable of the Talents, Jesus is concluding his teachings before he takes the path to the Cross. In his words he is teaching his disciples; in his Passion and Cross, he will be teaching everyone through what is done to him. The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids, which immediately precedes our text, ended with the words: "*So stay awake ..*". He was dealing with the need for his disciples to be ready. 'Being ready' is what is presented in the Beatitudes which Jesus presented at the start of his teaching. 'Being ready' or 'staying awake' refers to what will happen in the future. Yet the disciples need to be working now for the coming of the kingdom.¹ "*The way to wait for the Kingdom is to work for it to be realized*"². Waiting is not a passive activity. Waiting is rather applying ourselves using the gifts we have been given.

Jesus uses the word 'talent' which was worth 30kg of precious metal i.e. of immense value (millions of Dollars in today's terms). In this, Jesus is inferring that our abilities, given by God to each one of us, are of immense value and extent. God needs cooperation from each of us. God does not force us to do anything; he has made us free. The disciples would not yet see that Jesus was foreshadowing his leaving them in the image of the 'man on his way abroad'. Jesus is completing his teachings and his life. After his Cross and resurrection, the disciples would be left to use the gifts he had given them ① in his teachings (e.g. the Gospels) and ② in the immeasurable gifts flowing from the Sacraments and ③ the personal gifts of the Holy Spirit. The early Church would look back to this parable as a reminder to keep working for the coming of the Kingdom.

Read: **Matthew 25: 14 - 30**

Meditatio: How am I making the Kingdom come? Do I put my faith into action? Do I have good works that show my faith? Do I recognize all the gifts with which God has entrusted me? What are the gifts that I have been given? How do I cope with people who I see who have more gifts than me? What do I do with the gifts I have been given? How am I coping with the restricted access to the Sacraments? Do I understand that my gifts are for using? Am I afraid to use the gifts that I have? Are there gifts that I have hidden and do not use? Who is God for me? Is God providing for me that '*I may have life and life to the full*'? Is God trying to catch me out? Am I afraid of God? What do I understand of the Spirit's gift of the 'Fear of God'?³ Do I feel that God is calling me to share in his happiness? When I have used the gifts God has given to me, is that all I have to do? When I receive/find more gifts, what do I do with them? Will I ever finish working for the 'coming of the Kingdom'? At the end of my life, how will I be judged by the Lord? How do I cope with the temptation to be lazy? Have I known a wicked person? Would I ever call someone a 'good-for-nothing'? What is my image of Hell; is darkness part of that image? What is my image of Heaven; are happiness and light parts of that image?

Oratio: Pray that we will work together for the coming of God's Kingdom. Pray in thanks for the wonders of the world as well as the gifts God has entrusted to us. Pray for wider access to the Sacraments. Pray for a recognition of the gifts God has given us. Pray that our faith may be real by the good works we do. Pray for perseverance even despite the delay in the coming of the Kingdom. Pray that we will not miss opportunities nor omit using our God given gifts. Pray that we will keep active and not be lazy. Pray for hope in the promised happiness of heaven. Pray that wickedness will never be chosen because leads to destruction. Pray that we will persist in doing good because it brings increase. Pray for a proper approach to the 'fear of God'³. Pray for those who are mistaken that they are 'good-for-nothing'; God does not make junk!

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer — Reflect on your talents and how you are using them.

✍ Fr Joe

Matthew 25: 14 – 30

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out.

The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. "Sir," he said "you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made."

His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness." Next the man with the two talents came forward. "Sir," he said "you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness." Last came forward the man who had the one talent, "Sir," he said "I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you had not sown and gathering where you had not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back." But his master answered him, "You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have recovered my capital with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the five talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.'

Notes:

1 The Gospel reading last Sunday began " .. the kingdom of heaven **will be like**". This Sunday's Reading begins ".. the kingdom of heaven **is like**". So the Ten Bridesmaids Parable refers to the future while the Talents Parable refers to the present.

2 From footnotes on Mt 25:14 of the Christian Community Bible, pastoral edn 1988

3 My understanding: Through the Gift of Fear of the Lord the Holy Spirit helps us to live in awe at the wonders God has done for us, to be amazed at God's creativity and magnificence and to know God is near us even though he is so great.