

- And so...our parable today. The master of three servants of different gifts and abilities...very similar to our parable of last week of the 10 virgins—5 wise who prepared for the bridegroom’s arrival, and 5 foolish who did not.
 - And sort of a foreshadowing of next week’s Gospel parable in this same chapter 25 of Matthew—those who do works of charity attaining salvation, and those who don’t, do not.
 - The moral of today’s parable is obvious: God is the Master, we are the servants...each given certain “talents” and blessings to invest.
 - ...and at our final judgment, He will judge us on how well we used what HE provided us to bring a profit of souls to His kingdom.
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 - Now the rebuked servant with the apparent least ability made no effort to do anything with what he was given...relying on the excuse: “I was afraid.”
 - But regardless of ability, a servant’s purpose is to serve, and thus each person is given something...and so duty-bound to go out and invest that talent for the Master’s purpose—that of leading others to goodness, and thus to eternal life through Christ.
 - So it’s foolish for us to bury our gifts in the hole of fear or timidity...or, worse yet, self-indulgence, laziness, and greed.
 - Imagine what the condemnation of the Master would have been had the servant wasted his one talent on frivolity for himself.
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- Our first reading from the last chapter of Proverbs about the good wife dovetails nicely with this theme...not referring only—not even primarily—to husbands and wives, but even more so to Christ and His Church...to Bridegroom and bride...to Jesus and the individual disciple.
 - The “good wife” is praised for her industriousness, her charity and her foresight—just as are the two servants who used their talents well in Jesus’ parable.

2017

- Because there is trust given when God grants us His blessings, as in our first reading: *“When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize...”*
- This is how Christ views the good and worthy disciple—His Sacred Heart entrusted to him/her...that he/she will be found worthy of His trust and beneficence.
- Words omitted today, but which are included in the unabridged text of that section of Proverbs is the praise from the husband: *“Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all”* (Proverbs 31:29)...words of the Bridegroom to the disciple if we devote our lives to working for the good.

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- Whether the “talents” given us are wealth or abilities, we are to use them ultimately for good—to teach, to serve, to give, to pray—to ultimately lead others to Christ, and thus to eternal life.
 - You don’t have to be a bishop or a genius or endowed with superhuman ability; even the person who cleans, makes copies or shuttles kids back and forth has a vital role to play.
 - As St. Paul writes: *“...there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ...varieties of service, but the same Lord; ...varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.”* (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

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- St. André Bessette, for example, was a Holy Cross brother in Canada. He could not handle academics, so they made him a porter—simply a doorman—of a monastery. As he liked to joke: *“At the end of my novitiate, my superiors showed me the door...and I stayed there for forty years.”*
 - And yet...by his devotion to God, his charity and simple wisdom, he led thousands to Christ...and is known and beloved throughout Canada simply as “Brother André”.

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- So regardless of intelligence or wealth or fame, there is no life as trivial than one spent seeking the benefit of oneself alone.
 - We cannot: “*Love the Lord our God with all heart, mind, soul and strength, and neighbor as ourselves*” by seeking only our own material good. You cannot serve God AND mammon.
 - Serving God and others is our duty, our mission, our command... indeed, our whole purpose in life. It is why God creates each of us.
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 - So never doubt that blessings—talents—are given you...and what we are given we are given for a higher purpose which God intends.
 - He gives you what He gives you for the very purpose of you giving back with that profit of souls.
 - In our parable today, Jesus even gives us a sort of “out”, telling the bad servant: “*Should you not then [at least] have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?*”...the “bank” being the Church, which invests for the profit of souls for the Master.
 - God knows that not all have the fortitude or even ability to evangelize, teach, etc., but each has a way to support the mission of Christ in His Church, whether that be in material, active or spiritual support.
 - As St. Augustine writes: “*Of whose possessions do you give, if not from [God’s]? If you were to give of your own, it would be largess; but since you give of His, it is restitution. ‘For what have you that you have not received?’ These are the sacrifices most pleasing to God: mercy, humility, praise, peace, charity.*” (Liturgy of the Hours, Vol. IV, p. 536)
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 - So...as Jesus tells us repeatedly: “Do not be afraid.”...like the motto of the British SAS: “Who dares, wins!” The very act of working for good IS winning...for it is cooperation with God’s will and grace.
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- Jesus tells us to love one another as He has loved us...and He showed us what love really is: to give our lives for others.
- So let us use well and productively the talents given us, that we might hear on that final day: “*Well done, my good and faithful servant... Come, share your master's joy.*”

Reading 1

[Prv 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31](#)

When one finds a worthy wife,
her value is far beyond pearls.
Her husband, entrusting his heart to her,
has an unfailing prize.
She brings him good, and not evil,
all the days of her life.
She obtains wool and flax
and works with loving hands.
She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her fingers ply the spindle.
**She reaches out her hands to the poor,
and extends her arms to the needy.**
Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting;
the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
Give her a reward for her labors,
and let her works praise her at the city gates.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5](#)

R. (cf. 1a) Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Blessed are you who fear the LORD,
who walk in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
blessed shall you be, and favored.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
in the recesses of your home;
Your children like olive plants
around your table.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Behold, thus is the man blessed
who fears the LORD.
The LORD bless you from Zion:
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Reading II

[1 Thes 5:1-6](#)

Concerning times and seasons, brothers and sisters,
you have no need for anything to be written to you.
For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come
like a thief at night.
When people are saying, "Peace and security, "
then sudden disaster comes upon them,
like labor pains upon a pregnant woman,
and they will not escape.

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness,
for that day to overtake you like a thief.
For all of you are children of the light
and children of the day.
We are not of the night or of darkness.
Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do,
but let us stay alert and sober.

Gospel

[Mt 25:14-30 or 25:14-15, 19-21](#)

Jesus told his disciples this parable:
"A man going on a journey
called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.
To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one--
to each according to his ability.
Then he went away.
Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them,
and made another five.
Likewise, the one who received two made another two.
But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground
and buried his master's money.

After a long time
the master of those servants came back
and settled accounts with them.
The one who had received five talents came forward
bringing the additional five.
He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents.
See, I have made five more.'
His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.
Since you were faithful in small matters,
I will give you great responsibilities.'

Come, share your master's joy.'
Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said,
'Master, you gave me two talents.
See, I have made two more.'
His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.
Since you were faithful in small matters,
I will give you great responsibilities.
Come, share your master's joy.'
Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said,
'Master, I knew you were a demanding person,
harvesting where you did not plant
and gathering where you did not scatter;
so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground.
Here it is back.'
His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant!
So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant
and gather where I did not scatter?
Should you not then have put my money in the bank
so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?'
Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten.
For to everyone who has,
more will be given and he will grow rich;
but from the one who has not,
even what he has will be taken away.
And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside,
where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'"

or

Jesus told his disciples this parable:
"A man going on a journey
called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.
To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one--
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Come, share your master's joy.'"