

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today in our liturgy, we are reminded not just of the end of the liturgical year but of the end of all things and the preparations we need to make. Bible tells us that we are all created in the image and likeness of God and he has placed on us multiple gifts and blessings. He expects us to utilize these blessing for his kingdom and for his people and also develop the talents, he has given us. He wants us to be attentive and watchful for the coming of the Lord, who will take into account all that we have done. Today's Gospel focuses on the Christian attitude towards earthly life as we live in expectation of the Master's return. The implicit responsibility of each servant is to work and to multiply the talents entrusted to him. It is not enough just to preserve what one has been given. The Master expects the results from the person who has been given special talents.

Today's Reading from the Gospel of Matthew involved two stories. The first reminded us of the necessity to be watchful at all times. The second, the Parable of the Talents, informed us as to why we must persevere in our living faith, why we must be fruitful in all our thoughts, our words and our actions. Jesus gives his disciples and the Pharisees this parable to illustrate and emphasize the teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven and how everyone will be judged according the use he makes of the gifts God gives to human persons. Again, this parable is the story about the final judgment of God.

The parable of today gives us four important lessons. **First**, it tells us that God gives each person different gifts. Despite our tendencies always to compare ourselves with others, the actual number and quality is not important. We are only asked to make full use of what we have been uniquely given and to use them for the benefit of the community as a whole. When everyone does that, the community is enriched.

Second, our work is never completed. The first two servants showed how much they had earned; they were not told they could sit back and rest. Rather because of their

trustworthiness, even greater responsibilities were given to them. The more one has, the more will be given to him.

Third, the person who does nothing will be punished. The man with one talent did not lose it. He did not do anything at all with it. If he had tried and failed, he would have met compassion and forgiveness. Even the person with one miserable talent has something to offer to others. It is a sober warning that it is not just those who do evil deeds who will lose out but also those who have no positively good works to show. Every person has the responsibility to be active in the Kingdom.

Finally, to the one who has more will be given; from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. It seems rather unfair, like robbing the poor to pay the rich. But Jesus is rather saying that those who share generously the gifts they have been given are likely to find themselves constantly enriched.

Jesus' story of the talents teaches us to boldly prefer taking active risk in our lives over passive complacency. It tells the way Jesus will act with us when we do not utilize properly the talents he has so generously given us and expects a positive contribution from us. In this parable we have a man who was going on a journey and who summoned his slaves is a picture of Jesus. As the man entrusted his slaves with some talents, Jesus also entrusted us with spiritual gifts that have been bestowed upon us through the Holy Spirit. Through his gratuitous invitation, we have received the opportunity to become children of God. He has given us the opportunity to come closer to him through the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist. As the man expected his slaves to invest the talents that he had entrusted them with in order to be fruitful, the Lord Jesus also expects us to be fruitful.