

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 15, 2020

“...the day of the Lord will come
like a thief at night...

– 1 Thessalonians 5:2

“...for everyone who has, more will be given...”

– Matthew 25:29

This Sunday’s parable calls for investments of talents. But it’s not a nod to the Prosperity Gospel. Nor is it an exhortation to use gifts, such as practicing your piano, or perfecting your golf swing, or achieving your sourdough skills in bread baking. Nor is it a tale about a 401(k) or an IRA or a classic ’57 Chevrolet for that matter.

Then what is it about? It’s about investing our lives in the way of Jesus – Gospel living done fully without risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses. It’s being all in, and fully committed. And in the words of Sister Verna Holyhead: “your shares will come to maturity on the Day of the Lord when Jesus comes back.”

The three servants were given five Talents, two Talents and one Talent, respectively. A Talent was the largest unit of currency in Jesus’ day; one Talent amounted to 15 years of wages! Thus, each of the servants got ever more enormous amounts to work with. The first two doubled their amounts; the last one just buried it in his sandbox. When the landowner returned from his journey, he heaped praise and event more Talents on the first two servants, and berated and banished the fearful third one.

Peruvian scholar Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P., writes: “The parable tells us about two attitudes: of those who pass on what they have received from God and of those who keep for themselves what the Lord wanted to give to them.” He goes on to say its the responsibility of Christians throughout history to proclaim the Gospel: “In everyday life, with its good and bad moments, its tensions and conflicts, Jesus’ disciples have to bear witness to life. That is the meaning of receiving the talents.” The first two servants have produced fruits.

The third servant, Gutiérrez notes, is fearful and risk averse: “He thinks that a life of faith is something that happens only between God and himself.” Faith is not something we keep in a safe to protect it. Faith is a life, a life which is expressed in love and in gift to our neighbor and our enemy. Gutiérrez writes:

“In the Gospels, being afraid is equivalent to having no faith. Therefore how can we love without taking risks, without entering into the world of our country’s dispossessed, who are struggling for their right to live. Our solidarity with them will lead us to unforeseen dangers and conflicts and perhaps to misunderstandings within our own family and our own Christian community. However, the parable of the talents teaches us that the joy of the Lord (vv. 21–23), as well as our own joy, consists in a Christian life based on grace, courage and concern for others rather than on formality, self-protection, and fear.”

Matthew sets this gospel passage on the Mount of Olives where a few chapters from now Jesus will return and fall agonizingly into its dust as he struggles with his fate with its struggles and risks and responsibilities to bring about the world’s salvation. All of us are called to share in that risk taking. As Sister Verna Holyhead writes: “It is not the quality of the gifts with which we have been entrusted, but the quality of how we use them that will earn the Master’s approval.” She cites the 5th century Desert Father mystic, John the Dwarf’s communal reprimand: “We have put the light burden on one side, that is to say, self-accusation, and we have loaded ourselves with a heavy one, that is to say, self-justification.” She continues:

“The risks that earn us affirmation as ‘good and trustworthy’ servants are the ordinary kingdom exchanges of daily life: forgiving rather than burying a grudge in our hearts; standing by another in times of sorrow, failure, or misunderstanding; giving someone the benefit of the doubt; associating with those whom many consider the ‘wrong kind’ of unacceptable people; laying down one’s life for another – perhaps a misunderstood friend, rebellious child, a terminally ill spouse, aged parents. All this ‘now’ effort is prepping us for the ‘not yet’ entry into the kingdom.”

Meanwhile, this parable can be interpreted in the opposite way. Remember, Jesus did not live in a capitalist system. And aspersions

and condemnations were assigned in his culture for those who had heaps of wealth. These plutocrats were branded greedy and their wealth thought to be ill-gotten gain. Therefore, the third servant is the hero because he resisted the temptation to mimic his master, and in his words who was “harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter.” He resisted this temptation to be greedy, and was punished for it. That’s what happens to us when we resist the ways of the world, but we have a new heaven and new earth promised that far surpasses this one on our horizon. That’s where we shall wear a crown.

Here’s how Rev. Dr. Clarence Jordan translated our parable for mid-20th Century rural Georgia:

[“The God Movement, then, may be compared to] a businessman who was leaving town for a long time and called in his assistants and turned over his investments to them. He made one responsible for about five hundred thousand dollars, another two hundred thousand, and another a hundred thousand—according to each one’s ability—and then he left town.

Right away the man with the five hundred grand got to work and made five hundred more. The man with the two hundred grand did the same and made another two hundred. But the guy with the hundred C’s went and rented a safe-deposit box and put his boss’ money in it.

After a long time the boss returned and called his assistants together for an accounting. The one with the five hundred thousand brought his other five hundred thousand and said, ‘Sir, you let me have five hundred grand; look, I’ve made another five hundred.’ The boss said, ‘Splendid, you good and responsible worker! You were diligent with the smaller sum; I’ll entrust you with a larger one. You’ll be a partner in my business.’

Then the one with the two hundred G’s came and said, ‘Sir, you let me have two hundred thousand; look, I’ve made another two hundred.’ The boss said, ‘Splendid, you good and responsible worker! You were diligent with the smaller sum, I’ll entrust you with a larger one. You’ll be a partner in my business.’

Well, the hundred grand man came up and said, ‘Sir, I know you are a hard-nosed man, squeezing pennies you haven’t yet made and expecting a profit before the ink has dried. I was plain scared to take any chances, so I rented a safe-deposit box and put your money in it. Look, you’ve got every cent.’

But his boss replied, ‘You sorry, ornery bum! You knew that I squeeze

pennies I haven't yet made, and expect profits before the ink dries. Then you should have turned my money over to the bank so that upon my return I would get back at least my principal with interest.

So then, y'all take the money away from him and give it to the one with the million. For it will be given to everyone who has the stuff, and he'll have plenty, but the man who doesn't have the stuff will have even what he has taken away from him. Now as for this useless critter, throw him in the back alley. That'll give him something to moan and groan about.'

– Matthew 25:14-30 paraphrase in
The Cotton Patch Gospel

Before we move into today's liturgy, let's pause a while to consider our first reading from the last chapter of Proverbs. The Ode to the Capable Wife follows the Hebrew poetic style called "acrostic" or "alphabetical" in that each strophe begins with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet – something we can't really see in English translation. It's a portrait of a household ruled by Woman Wisdom and a disciple of Woman Wisdom. We just get a glimpse in today's excerpt included in our Mass readings, so here's the whole poem for you to reflect on this week. Note that the attributes this wife is clothed are strength, dignity, industry, generosity, charitably – all of which are usually given to God or exemplary men in Scripture. At every Jewish Sabbath meal, this whole poem is often read or sung by a woman's husband and/or children. We Christians families could learn much from this loving ritual wisdom that every week tells a wife and mother how much she is loved and valued. At the minimum, try reciting it this Thanksgiving!

Proverbs 31:1, 10-31

New Revised Standard Version

31:1 The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:

Ode to a Capable Wife

10

A capable wife who can find?^[L]_[SEP]
She is far more precious than jewels.

11

The heart of her husband trusts in her,^[L]_[SEP]
and he will have no lack of gain.

12

She does him good, and not harm,^[L]_[SEP]

all the days of her life.

13

She seeks wool and flax,^{[L][SEP]}
and works with willing hands.

14

She is like the ships of the merchant,^{[L][SEP]}
she brings her food from far away.

15

She rises while it is still night,^{[L][SEP]}
and provides food for her household,^{[L][SEP]}
and tasks for her servant-girls.

16

She considers a field and buys it;^{[L][SEP]}
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.

17

She girds herself with strength,^{[L][SEP]}
and makes her arms strong.

18

She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.^{[L][SEP]}
Her lamp does not go out at night.

19

She puts her hands to the distaff,^{[L][SEP]}
and her hands hold the spindle.

20

She opens her hand to the poor,^{[L][SEP]}
and reaches out her hands to the needy.

21

She is not afraid for her household when it snows,^{[L][SEP]}
for all her household are clothed in crimson.

22

She makes herself coverings;^{[L][SEP]}
her clothing is fine linen and purple.

23

Her husband is known in the city gates,^{[L][SEP]}
taking his seat among the elders of the land.

24

She makes linen garments and sells them;^{[L][SEP]}
she supplies the merchant with sashes.

25

Strength and dignity are her clothing,^{[L][SEP]}
and she laughs at the time to come.

26

She opens her mouth with wisdom,^{[L][SEP]}
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

27

She looks well to the ways of her household,^{[L][SEP]}
and does not eat the bread of idleness.

28

Her children rise up and call her happy;^{[L] [SEP]}
her husband too, and he praises her:

29

“Many women have done excellently,^{[L] [SEP]}
but you surpass them all.”

30

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,^{[L] [SEP]}
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

31

Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,^{[L] [SEP]}
and let her works praise her in the city gates.

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

33rd Sunday of the Church Year– 15 November 2020

Prelude: “Oh Happy Day” Edwin Hawkins - Anthony Brown
with First Baptist Church Gospel Combined Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olQrCfkvbGw>

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and
the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

Lord Jesus, you are the Way to a full and holy life:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are the Truth that guides us on the path:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the Life for which we long:

Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

O God, from whose own abundance
all gifts and skills are lavishly bestowed,
encourage us to live our lives as generously
as you have allotted them, so that, being faithful to your purpose,
we may become sharers in your glory.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Let the Church say....AMEN!

Listen to “Better” by Hezekiah Walker:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFgkZX9Z65M>

Then move on to this Sunday’s readings:

**Readings for Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 15 2020**

1st Reading – Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

- ¹⁰ When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls.
¹¹ Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize.
¹² She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.
¹³ She obtains wool and flax and works with loving hands.
¹⁹ She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle.
²⁰ She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy.
³⁰ Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
³¹ Give her a reward for her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalms 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

¹ Blessed are you who fear the LORD,^{{}{}{}}
who walk in his ways!

² For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;^{{}{}{}}
blessed shall you be, and favored.^{{}{}{}}

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

³ 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.

⁴ Behold, thus is the man blessed^{{}{}{}}who fears the LORD.^{{}{}{}}

⁵ 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.

2nd Reading – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

¹ Concerning times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you.

² For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night.

³ 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.

⁴ But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to overtake you like a thief.

⁵ For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness.

⁶ Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert and sober.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Gospel – Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus told his disciples this parable:^[LUT]^[SEP]¹⁴ “A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.

¹⁵ To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately

¹⁶ the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five.

¹⁷ Likewise, the one who received two made another two.

¹⁸ But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money.

¹⁹ After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them.

²⁰ 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.’

²¹ 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.’

²² 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.’

²³ 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.’

²⁴ 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;

²⁵ so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.’

²⁶ 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?’

²⁷ Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?’

²⁸ Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.....Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection Prompts:

First, sing along with “Give Me a Clean Heart” led by the Rev. James Cleveland and the Southern California Community Choir

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLXeqvVsQ_s

- How is the Spirit emboldening you to combat systems in which the rich become richer and the poor become poorer?
- How could members of Lourdes stand shoulder to shoulder together to undermine systems that fuel greed?

Meditation Prompts:

First, float away listening to “I Shall Wear a Crown” presented by composer Minister Thomas Whitfield and the Thomas Whitfield Company live in Detroit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxPuK1xfcDg>

It is written in Proverbs 9:10 that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom.” That holy fear refers to the awe and wonder you can feel when you think of the vastness of God. But there are other unproductive and unholy fears. That’s what we need to move away from.

- Ask Jesus to free you from any image of God that instills fear of punishment.

Then move into this week’s prayers of the faithful.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – November 15, 2020
THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Presider: As we continue our observance of Black Catholic History Month, let us sing a song full of the faith that the ancestors have taught us, and also pray for all who are in great need on this World Day of the Poor.

Worship Leader

1. Pope Francis beckons us to hear the cries of the poor. Thus we ask for the courage to share our goods and our lives with the most vulnerable in our midst. We pray: **Hear us, O God.** (RESPOND: **Hear us, O God.**)
2. For the pioneers of Black Catholic liturgy who have gone before us, especially Fr. Clarence Rivers, Leon Roberts, Roderick Bell and now our own beloved Kenya Griffin, in praise of their deepening our worship through their artistry. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
3. For the canonization of Father Augustus Tolton, and for all the pioneers who desegregated the altar in the American church. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
4. For all those suffering from the Covid-19 virus, for all their caregivers, and for medical researchers and public health officials seeking vaccines and medications. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
5. For commitments and actions to renew the face of the Earth with clean soil, water and air for the benefit of future generations. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
6. For long-term commitments by individuals and institutions to erase Racism and White Supremacy in American society. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
7. For commitments and actions to renew the face of the Earth with clean soil, water and air for the benefit of future generations. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**

8. For all those who are unemployed or underpaid, that they find the work they seek with a living wage and humane benefits. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
9. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
10. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Mary Francis, Kay Fred Schultz and Kenya Griffin for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
11. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**

Presider: Compassionate God, you are the Balm in Gilead who calls us each by name and who binds up all of our wounds. Listen to the deepest concerns of our hearts and heal all that is broken within or between us. We pray in the name our Healer Jesus. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Sing or recite “The Lord’s Prayer.”

Then, behold “Heal Our Land” with the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses (NCGCC) Mass Choir [founded by Dr. Thomas Dorsey]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-p3P0ahuYz0>

Closing Prayer

Good and gracious God, grant that we may always take delight in your service, for only through our faithfulness to you, the author of every good, will full and lasting happiness be ours. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Let the Church say.....AMEN!

Closing Hymn

“Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand” sung by the Chicago Mass Choir:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSHDWj2au_o