

[Readings: Prov. 31:10-13; 19-20; 30-31; Ps.128; 1 Thess. 5:1-6; Matt. 25:14-30]

We know what the parable means, don't we? God has given us talents, and we should use them for the stewardship of the Church. Short homily!

And yet, let us remember that the parable of the [talents](#) follows an end times parable of the delayed bridegroom. The emphasis of the parable is upon God's coming at the end of time. And the parable of talents is related to the final judgment of Our Lord.

For Jesus, a [talent](#) is not about skills or abilities. It is about money. And not a small quantity of money. In fact, it is a weighty barrel full of cash. 75 to 100 pounds of silver and gold equal to 20 years of annual income! To even receive one talent for Jesus' audience would be wealth beyond imagination. The language of talent points to the generosity of God. The servants are given talents not because they have earned them. The master bestows [talents on loan](#).

And yet the servant given but one talent is incapable of recognizing this divine economy. He absurdly buries his barrel full of cash in what must have been a sizable hole. Worse, he accuses his master of being harsh, rather than generous. The fault of the man possessing a single talent is the incapacity to recognize the generosity of God. What has been given to him in that talent is not for his own possession. God gives, so that we might also give. Nothing is ours, all things come from God alone. And when we give out of what we have received, the divine investment doubles.

That is the proper attitude of the disciple awaiting the coming of Our Lord at the end of time. Yet the [bridegroom](#) has not left us bereft of gifts. We possess the gift of creation, the Scriptures, the sacraments, prayer and the works of mercy. God has given us [wealth beyond wealth!](#) What are we doing with it?

The conversion that Jesus is calling us toward is a return to a total "attitude of gratitude" for the God who gives. We, too, must become those who give, offering our whole selves back to God.

The Church evangelizes when she lives as one who has received everything from God, offering this divine gift to the world.

Our parishes require a renewal according to the generous economy of gift revealed by Jesus Christ. It is not enough to fulfill Sunday obligations, to give but a bit of cash away in the Sunday offering, to pray a little when we must, or to think about the hungry and thirsty on Mission Sunday. This is not the attitude of one who has received the stunning gift of redemption, the impossibly powerful liberation from sin and death, and the surprising offer of sanctification in the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

The oil in our lamps is the gratitude we possess for the gift of the bridegroom to the Church, to the world, to you and me!

So we must prepare ourselves. Our preparation is a formation into a Eucharistic gratitude for the sacrificial love of the Word made flesh, more precious than silver or gold.

After all, that sacrifice of love unto the end is the talent of all talents that we have been given by the supremely prodigal God.

When it comes to our skills and abilities, God simply did not make us all the same. There are some people who can handle five talents; there are some who can handle only one or two. There are some persons who are really smart and some who are smart in other ways.

There are some who are musical or artistic, or handy in the repair shop, the kitchen or spiritually, and there are some who are not. There are some who have physical athletic ability and attractive looks, and there are some who do not.

The important thing to remember is that each servant is given something. No one is rejected or forgotten. You may not be a five-talent person, but you have some talent. I think that there are a whole lot more one- and two- talent people in this world than there are five-talent people.

Whatever gifts we have, "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." Sounds like some kind of "Voodoo Economics" to me! What do Jesus' words mean? First and foremost, all that we have comes from God. And we are to put it to good use. Secondly, if we are self-centered hoarders, we keep what little we have close to our chest. We hug it tightly so we don't lose it. But, alas, it

WILL be taken away. Don't put your stock in what little you have. Be open to receive much from God, Who has splendid plans for you and your future!

What are we doing with our talents? In high school, all of us had to take an aptitude/vocations test. Guess what I was best qualified for? A librarian or a bookkeeper! Isn't THAT exciting, boys and girls? But as I entered college and began to see more of what God wanted me to be and to become, I discovered other talents: writing, speaking, acting, humor, compassion, listening, praying. Put all that together, and you can see how priesthood was a logical choice!

Each of us, no matter how mundane our lives might seem, bears the potential for great things. Hidden in every young shepherd boy could be a king (David), and every teenage girl might bring Christ into the world. Any thief could buy his way into Paradise in the eleventh hour with a single act of kindness ("Remember me, Lord, when you come into your kingdom."). A very old couple might well be the parents of a new and blessed nation even though their lives seem almost over (Abraham and Sarah). An abused and forsaken single mother could encounter an angel and through that experience learn that God sees and knows her and is preparing a way for her and her rejected child. It would not be wrong to say that we have a religious obligation to believe these things and to bring these divine surprises to life within us. We are all talented.

Some of us can dance and some of us can paint or cook or think brilliant thoughts or fix anything that's broken. But that's not the whole story of how God grants talents far and wide to those who would be servants of the divine will.

We are each "talented" by the God who gifts us and provides us with every grace and blessing. Those talents may naturally lead us into a specific vocation to scientific endeavors or teaching; working with our hands or our head; community service or civic leadership; marriage and family life; priesthood or religious life. Yet our job or our role is only one expression of the divine talent that has been given to us.

Your Questions for Reflection this week:

How able am I to trust God and follow what God sets before me?

What are the outcomes when I try to control or manipulate a situation?
What can I do to be more trusting that “all shall be well” without my interference?

What are my greatest fears and struggles? Do I have the courage or
desire to let God help me through them?

Our best friends help get us to Heaven, and we help them get to Heaven.
Faith, hope and love are three talents God gives all of us. We just need to tap
into them and use them, with the help of our friends on earth, and our oldest and
newest friends in Heaven. AMEN!