



Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
November 15, 2020

What's Our ROI?

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The Gospel today encourages good investments. Jesus heaps praise on the good servants who were faithful in small matters and rewarded with the joy of the master. The servant who gets called wicked and lazy is punished, not because he miscalculated a risk but because he feared his master and took no risk at all. He was frozen by the thought that he could lose everything, so he buries the talent and anxiously awaits the master's return. He is wicked, not for investing poorly, but for not investing at all.

God has given us all so many talents, and he does so for us to enjoy a grand return on investment (ROI). He wants us to use our talents, work them, develop them, and—at the end of our lives—enjoy showing him the way they have multiplied. Like a loving parent, he knows that much of our happiness is in developing and growing those talents with his grace. Those talents are a sign of his call and an invitation to step out in faith.

Parents, your job is to help your children develop their talents and dreams. A confident, enthusiastic, and risk-taking child is a sign of parents who know the balance of loving discipline, positive motivation, and a healthy distance. Children who feel secure in the love of their parents are willing to venture out and invest their talents, for they know someone will always be there to accompany them and catch them if they fall.

Our loving God is the first to know this and so invites us with this parable to trust, invest, and enjoy the returns. +

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A Word from Pope Francis

From our own death and from our gift, the life and health of others, sick and suffering, may spring forth, helping to reinforce a culture of help, of giving, of hope, and of life. In the face of the threats against life...society needs these concrete gestures of solidarity and generous love.

—Address to Italian Association for the Donation of Organs, Tissues, and Cells, April 13, 2019



Sunday Readings

Proverbs 31:10–13, 19–20, 30–31

Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; / the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. / Acclaim her for the work of her hands.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–6

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

Matthew 25:14–30 or 25:14–15, 19–21

[Jesus said,] "It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What are the most important talents I have? Think of virtues, abilities, qualities, time.
- Which talent should I invest in more so I can enjoy the return God wants?

Auditing Racism

By Most Reverend Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

The company that manages our electrical service called our parish one day. The agent said the company would do a free energy audit. The audit would produce a report detailing the ways we could save energy and lower our bill. The company also offered us energy-saving light bulbs, free.

We've been audited many times. Every three to five years diocesan auditors visit for two or three days to review the parish finances to make sure everything adds up. We've been through compliance audits for ethical ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We've had rain, runoff, and wastewater audits. One time, everyone who served at the parish did a time audit. We looked at our daily activities to better understand our priorities and effectiveness in ministry.

An audit is an examination of conscience or review of life. Time is set aside for reflection on a specific area of living. Deep analysis, reflection, and evaluation can bring new insight. In the end, we can accentuate the positives and hopefully address the negatives. A goal is attitudinal and/or behavioral change for the better.

Audits or examinations of conscience are regular parts of Catholic life. So why not a racism audit? Would you or your church community do a racism audit every few years? How do you think you'd do? Right away you might feel defensive and set up obstacles to such a review with statements like: "We've done this,"



"I'm not racist," "It's not a problem here," "That's politics," "The Church apologized for that long ago," and more.

I respectfully wave off all obstacle-creating excuses. For an audit to measure an organization's tolerance for and acceptance of diversity and inclusion, two areas of inquiry are required: individual, and organizational. The audit focuses on the individual or personal because an institution is the sum of its parts, and it also focuses on the organization, because structures and systems—like people—hold and transmit beliefs and values.

Employing the audit does not reveal if a person is or is not racist. You don't pass or fail an audit result. The goal is to measure inclusion—that is, the levels of inclusivity at work in a person or

organization. Inclusion can be measured in a number of areas: values and attitudes, skills and abilities, occupation, and personal features or personality.

A level of bias, inclusivity, and/or exclusivity is at work in all of us whether we are aware of it or not. Bias is often unconscious or automatic. Our willingness to examine our own possible biases is an important step in understanding the roots of stereotypes and prejudice in our Church and in society.

How might the Church change if dioceses and parishes—like many corporations and businesses—hired inclusion officers to perform regular audits of parishes and ministries? Racism, prejudice, and bias in our country aren't going away. Maybe we should add one more audit to the annual list. +

Bias is often unconscious. Our willingness to examine our own possible biases is an important step in understanding the roots of prejudice.



Lord, I am grateful for all your blessings. Help me to use your gifts of love and compassion to rebuild people's lives.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 16–21

Monday, Weekday:

Rv 1:1–4; 2:1–5 / Lk 18:35–43

Tuesday, St. Elizabeth of Hungary:

Rv 3:1–6, 14–22 / Lk 19:1–10

Wednesday, Weekday:

Rv 4:1–11 / Lk 19:11–28

Thursday, Weekday:

Rv 5:1–10 / Lk 19:41–44

Friday, Weekday:

Rv 10:8–11 / Lk 19:45–48

Saturday, Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Rv 11:4–12 / Lk 20:27–40