

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

November 13, 2011

This Sunday's Readings



First Reading

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

The virtues of a good wife are extolled.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

Blessed are those who walk in God's ways.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Paul warns the Thessalonians to stay alert because the day of the Lord cannot be predicted.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus tells the parable of the talents, in which he teaches about the importance of using the gifts that God has given to us in service to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Background on the Gospel Reading

This week's Gospel speaks of how Jesus' disciples are to conduct themselves as they await the Kingdom of Heaven. In the preceding passages and in last week's Gospel, Jesus taught that there is no way to predict the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. His disciples must, therefore, remain vigilant and ready to receive the Son of Man at any time.

Jesus' parable talks about Christian discipleship using economic metaphors. Before he leaves on a journey, the master entrusts to his servants a different number of talents, giving to each according to their abilities. A *talent* is a coin of great value. Upon the master's return, he finds that the first and second servants have doubled their money, and both are rewarded. The third servant, however, has only preserved what was given to him because he was afraid to lose the money. He has risked nothing; he did not even deposit the money in a bank to earn interest. This servant is punished by the master, and his talent is given to the one who brought the greatest return.

Read in light of last week's parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids, this parable teaches that God's judgment will be based on the service we render to God and to one

another in accordance with the gifts that God has given to us. Our gifts, or talents, are given to us for the service of others. If we fail to use these gifts, God's judgment on us will be severe. On the other hand, if we make use of these gifts in service to the Kingdom of Heaven, we will be rewarded and entrusted with even more responsibilities.

This Gospel reminds us that Christian spirituality is not passive or inactive. Our life of prayer helps us to discern the gifts that have been given to us by God. This prayer and discernment ought to lead us to use our gifts in the service of God and our neighbor. God's grace allows us to share in the work of serving the Kingdom of Heaven.

Family Connection

In today's Gospel, Jesus talks about the correlation between faithfulness and responsibilities. Family life provides many opportunities to illustrate this connection for children. As children prove themselves trustworthy, they can be trusted to take on greater responsibilities. Jesus teaches us in this parable that when we show ourselves to be trustworthy in small matters, we can be trusted to participate in greater matters of responsibility.

As you gather as a family, take some time to recall how each child in the family has matured and can now be trusted with greater responsibilities.

Say: *In today's Gospel, Jesus talked about how our trustworthiness in small matters shows that we can also be trusted to share in the work of serving the Kingdom of Heaven.* Read Matthew 15:14-30. Say: ***We share in the work of serving the Kingdom of Heaven when we use our talents to help and serve others.***

As a family, choose one thing to do this week to serve others. Conclude in prayer together, asking God's help so that your family may serve others more faithfully. Pray together the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord,
by the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.
In the same Spirit
help us to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.