

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

November 15, 2020 A

Facilitator: *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask him to help us to hear the Word he wants us to hear this week.*

Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.

Opening prayer: *Loving God, in your Word today, you call us to be wise and industrious stewards of all that you have placed in our care. Help us to develop and utilize all that you have given us to bless the communities we belong to. Breathe your Spirit upon us as we gather to share life in your Word. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Response to last week's Word: [Facilitator briefly recalls last week's Gospel.] *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week.*

Facilitator reads focus statement: In the first reading, the author describes all that a good wife embodies. Amongst other things, she uses her talents to bless others. In the second reading, Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to be watchful and ready for when the Lord comes at the end of the age, which no one knows when. In the Gospel, we are urged to put our God-given talents to use for the good of mankind and the greater glory of God.

Let us listen to God's Word to hear what it is he wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a word, you may want to underline it or write it down to remember.

Read the first reading, the psalm, and the second reading, pausing briefly after each one.

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

This reading paints a picture of an ideal or worthy wife. Today's Gospel defines the woman as one who uses her talents well in contrast to the servant who buries his talents. Also, in the context of Wisdom literature (which the Book of Proverbs is), the industrious woman is a personification of Wisdom.

Wisdom literature extols the blessings of wisdom as a great prize, worth more than gold, more than a long life or power. Wisdom imparts to all who befriend her that all they need to be successful in the world, is their relationship with God and their family. The wise woman "is a value beyond pearls, her children rise up to praise her (not in today's reading); she reaches out to the poor."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 128

This wisdom psalm refers to the blessing of a worthy wife extolling the virtues of family life in general.

SECOND READING: 1Thessalonians 5:1-6

Paul continues to respond to questions about Jesus' return. He tells the Thessalonians that having no knowledge of the day nor the hour, they should be in constant vigilance and live always as children of the light.

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL: Matt. 25:14-30

As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.

**A participant reads the Gospel,
then all pause to reflect.**

As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to underline or write down the word you hear.

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30

This Gospel is addressed to Jesus's disciples who are compared to servants entrusted with certain talents which are to be used well to promote Jesus' mission.

It is important to note that the mean and very demanding master in the story does not represent God. Having said that, we can say that in telling this story, Jesus is saying to his disciples (and to us) that the time of waiting for his return is not to be a time of passive waiting or non-engagement out of fear of failure. Waiting for Jesus' return is "a time of opportunity, of active engagement and creative growth" (Diane Bergant). In his first letter, St. Peter reminds us: "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (4:10). This parable is teaching the disciples (and us) to not let the

fear of failure and fear of unacceptability prevent us from using the gifts we have received.

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Turn to the person next to you and share what verse or image in the readings caught your attention or drew you in. Was there a verse or aspect of the readings that challenged you?

The facilitator can decide which is more helpful: to share the next questions with the whole group, or to share in smaller groups of three or four.

2. Name some of the talents or gifts God has given you. What gifts or talents have you developed? What gifts or talents still wait to be developed?

3. What gifts or talents have you shared in the past? Or do you currently share those gifts or talents with your Church or wider community?

4. Are you hiding a gift that you should be using to benefit others?

5. Is there a 'stepping up to the plate' that you have not done out of fear of failure? Can you name a time you 'stepped up to the plate' even though you had a fear of failure?

6. What is Jesus saying to you this Sunday about how a faithful disciple should act?

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Share with the person next to you one way you can act on this week's readings. Suggestion: Spend time thinking about a talent you have that has not been developed or is developed but has not been used to bless others.

JOURNALING

Having listened to God's Word and listened to others reflections on it, take a quiet moment to reflect on what you are hearing God say to you. Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as he asks of you. When ready, jot down your reflections.

PRAYING WITH THE WORD

Facilitator: Let us now pause to see how something(s) said in the reading might lead us into shared prayer. Suggestion: *Father, Giver of all good gifts, thank you for the gifts you have given us. Help me to see if there is a gift I am not using and to begin to use it to bless others. In Jesus name, I pray.*

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, PETITION AND INTERCESSION

Facilitator: What are we grateful for? For whom and for what do we need to pray?

CLOSING PRAYER (together)

*Heavenly Father,
thank you for blessing your Church family
with a multitude of gifts.
Thank you for the gifts you have given me.
Help us all to be good stewards of your blessings.
Amen.*