



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE A

Fr. David Rosenberg

visit us at <http://HopeCrossingMinistries.com/>

"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." Matt 25:23

As we rapidly approach the end of our Church calendar year, we dive deeper into the mystery of "End Times." Last Sunday we heard the stark words of Jesus, *"Stay awake! You know neither the day nor the hour!" Matt 25:13* This Sunday Jesus expands on the necessity to take action, in this moment, as we hear His "Parable of the Talents." Jesus exhorts us to use our God-given gifts and talents for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God, and rise into illumination from the mundane life of mere mortal existence. It is only through "metanoia" and a mystical encounter with Jesus Christ that He changes our hearts so that we might overcome our fears and shortcomings. For many of us it can be a bit threatening to take risks, particularly in our call to evangelize, to *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." Mark 16:15* As a matter of fact, this parable points out that the Christian life itself is a risk, and to ignore that fact is to essentially turn away from our Christian imperative.

Keep in mind from the beginning that the third man, who buried his talent, had at least a twinge of conscience, what St Ignatius of Loyola would call a moment bereft of joy, when he decided against taking a prayerfully discerned course. He knew that he was acting out of fear but chose to do that rather than rising through the gift of grace bestowed on us for the asking, by the Holy Spirit. In this moment of "conversion" he would have been consoled with a new-found understanding and wisdom, that this risk ultimately would reap a spiritual reward. The great irony is that he would not lose anything after all. If this man had acted in a transformative moment of innocence and naiveté, he most certainly would have been treated more sympathetically.

The original meaning of this parable may have been much simpler and more historically grounded than our perception of it as an allegory on industry, courage and wise investment of our gifts. It may have been Jesus' way of pointing out the futility of clutching to our selfish ways. This is the deadly opposite of the great commissioning that Jesus Christ bestowed on us just before He ascended into heaven. Jesus' Great Commission, found at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, is the instruction of the resurrected Jesus Christ to his disciples to spread the gospel to all the nations of the world, taking on His mission in the world. Those who were not open to his teaching may have been guilty of fleeing this responsibility. If faith is seen as something that has to be protected, it most certainly will stifle us, and inhibit our journey along the Pilgrim's Way of the Cross. Faith without prayer, time of contemplation, and mission is not genuine and in this static environment we certainly cannot grow and mature spiritually.

This week, let us reflect on those areas of our life where we are called to fulfill our vocation through the expression of our charisms and gifts, bestowed on us at our conception and baptism. Let our anthem be to journey to the place God calls us to where our deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

"A man going on a journey
called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.
To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one--
to each according to his ability.

Then he went away.

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

Likewise, the one who received two made another two.

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

"After a long time

the master of those servants came back
and settled accounts with them.

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.'

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.'

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.'

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.'

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;

so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground.

Here it is back.'

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?

Should you not then have put my money in the bank

so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?

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

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.

And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside,

where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'"