Sunday 15th November 2026

2nd Sunday before Advent

Gospel Reading

Matthew 25.14-30.
"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents."

His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours."

But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest.

So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All Praise to you, O Christ.

Other readings: Zephaniah 1.7, 12–end
Psalm 90.1–8 [9–11] 12 [or 90.1–8]
1 Thessalonians 5.1–11
Homily

From a very early age, if we are fortunate, we are encouraged to learn, to develop skills and accept responsibility. As we do so, we discover the many gifts and talents that God has bestowed upon us to use in His service, and with help and encouragement we develop more fully into the people God has planned for us to be.

It starts simply enough, as a toddler you learned 'tidy up time' meant putting your toys away, first with help and then you became responsible for doing it by yourself. Perhaps you graduated to taking care of the family goldfish or walking the dog.

When you went to school you suddenly discovered that it was your responsibility to ensure that you had everything that you needed for your day in your schoolbag, especially remembering your packed lunch and your homework.

Going to college or university you quickly learned how important it was to be able to do your own washing, cooking and cleaning, as well as how to enjoy yourself, but also ensure that you engaged with your learning.

When you got your first job you worked hard and became successful, but you also had to keep on learning new skills to cope with the demands placed upon you. Your bosses recognised your talents and you were promoted, suddenly you had more responsibility, and life threw a lot of challenges at you.

In the meantime, you fell in love, you bought a house, maybe got married and had a family of your own – just about the most challenging job that any of us ever have.

Each time you rose to the challenge, being honest with yourself, you recognised that you can't get everything right first time every time, but you learned the important lessons. Throughout your life, you have discovered new things about yourself, all that you were capable of doing and being. Glorifying God, You turned his two talents of gold into four, and then the five talents of gold into ten.

And God watches over you. Like every good parent, he cheers you on when things go well, equally, he may have laughed or cringed at some of the choices you have made. But God has never interfered. He knows that we have to grow through our mistakes to learn to be the best, but he always encourages us to make good use of the gifts and talents he has bestowed upon us.

Not everyone in life feels as blessed as this. For some people, life was always a challenge that never got any easier. As more challenges piled up life spiralled out of control, and one extra little responsibility, something that on a good day would be easily managed, suddenly became the straw that broke the camel's back.

Yet, instead of being honest and seeking help, our shame in not being able to cope often leads us to just not bother, causes us to hide our worries in a hole in a field, and then to be resentful when we are challenged about our failure.

One of the challenges we are asked to face in life is to be honest with ourselves, to acknowledge that we haven't always learned the lessons we needed, perhaps because we couldn't be bothered, or maybe no one seemed to care if we succeeded or not, so we lived down to other people's expectations of us. Maybe it was fear that prevented us from action.

But God had wonderful plans for us. Before we were even 'knit together in the womb' he had our days marked out always knowing what he wanted us to be. God had given each one of us, without exception, a vocation to be and do something to help build His Kingdom, and he gave us everything we needed to succeed, we just had to trust in his promises and make the responsible life choices even though it was a tough ask.

Now life does go horribly wrong, things happen that are not in our control, and our heavenly father who loves us is merciful and gentle when we don't manage to be all that we could be. He understands. BUT, and there is always a but, the one proviso is that we at least always try. If we can't be bothered to make the effort, then we may well be asked difficult questions about why we squandered the gifts and the chances we were given. Amen

Conversation Questions

1. Have you ever walked away from a challenge that you now realise was a great opportunity sent to test you and enable you to grow?

2. How might you answer God if he asks you why you didn't even try?

3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?

4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope,
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory
we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;
where he is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

(Or)

Heavenly Lord,
you long for the world's salvation:
stir us from apathy,
restrain us from excess
and revive in us new hope
that all creation will one day be healed
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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