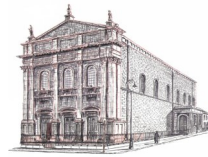




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA
14H/15TH NOVEMBER 2020



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Jesus I Trust in You

POPE SAYS: WE MUST USE OUR GIFTS FOR GOOD

Pope Francis reflects on the Parable of the Talents, in St Matthew's Gospel (25:14-30), on this penultimate (last) Sunday of the liturgical calendar year, saying that God will reward "those who have used their gifts to do good." Jesus shares this parable in His discourse on the end times, immediately before His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

TO EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY

The parable describes three servants entrusted with large sums of money by their master, who goes away on a journey. In the parable, Pope Francis noted, the master gives to each of the servants "according to their ability." "The Lord does so with all of us," the Pope explained. God "knows us well. He knows we are not all equal and does not wish to favour any one to the detriment of others, but He entrusts capital to each one according to his or her abilities." When the master returns and the servants are called to give an account of the money entrusted to them, two present "the good fruits of their efforts," and are praised by the master. The third, however, who had hidden his talent, is condemned by the master and cast out of his household.

USING OUR GIFTS FOR GOOD

"This parable," the Pope said, "applies to everyone but, as always, to Christians in particular." He added that it is particularly relevant today, on the World Day of the Poor, when the Church urges everyone to stretch forth our hands to the poor. We are all given different abilities – and "these gifts need to be used to do good in this life, as a service to God and to our brothers and sisters."

PAY ATTENTION TO THE POOR

Speaking off-the-cuff, Pope Francis urged everyone to look at the poor, of which there are many. "There is so much hunger, even in the heart of our cities," he said. "Often we enter into a mindset of indifference: the poor person is there but we look the other way." Instead, he said, "stretch forth your hand to the poor: He is Christ." Jesus, added the Pope, taught us to speak to the poor. He came for the poor."

LEARNING CONSIDERATE LOVE

Once again, Pope Francis pointed to the Blessed Virgin Mary as an example for all of us. She "received a great gift, Jesus Himself, but she did not keep Him to herself. She gave Him to the world," he said. "May we learn from her to stretch forth our hands to the poor," he concluded. (Vatican News/Christopher Wells).

NOVEMBER ALTAR LIST OF THE DEAD

PRIVATE DAILY MASS IS CELEBRATED, BY FR BRENDAN, FOR THOSE ON THE NOVEMBER LIST OF THE DEAD, RIGHT UP TO CHRISTMAS. ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH TO WRITE THE NAMES OF LOVED ONES WHO WILL BE REMEMBERED. MAY THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

THE TALENT TO LOVE AND FORGIVE EACH OTHER IN FAITH

Talents symbolise all the gifts that God gives us, including the Church and all Her Sacraments and Teachings. Today's First Reading (Proverbs 31:10-13), describes the Church, who is the Bride of Christ, as the *Perfect Wife*, to help us. In today's Gospel (Matt 25:14-30), Jesus is comparing our Faith, which God *entrusted* to us, in the same way, as the man in the parable, who *entrusted Talents to his servants*. We Christians will also be *summoned*, when Jesus returns, *from abroad*, (Heaven), on the Day of Judgement, demanding an account on how we spent the Faith He gave us. This sacred Talent was deposited into our hearts at our baptism. Jesus is always *summoning* us to serve Him, within the limited period of *worldly time*, which is another Talent. Some people are given more time (talents) than others, or less time (talents) than others, to spend their Talents courageously, without fear. This means spending our time on earth serving God and not the Devil, who produces counterfeit talents, called sin.

HELL IS FULL OF LAZY SOULS

The Talents of Faith and Knowledge, enable us to spend our time wisely, in order, to spiritually purchase Divine Wisdom, which teaches us to do God's Divine Will, *on earth as it is in Heaven*. The divine currency of faith is prayer, which lines the purse of our hearts, with the rich fruits of the Holy Spirit. To be spiritually lazy and not pray or not bother with Mass, is to bury the Talents. This unspiritual attitude places our souls in danger of never living with Jesus in Heaven. Jesus said of the lazy servant, *to throw him out into the dark [hell], where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth*. It only stands to reason, that if, someday, we want to live with Jesus in Heaven, then we must first begin to live with Jesus here on earth. We do this by being of service to our neighbour and a devoted Member of the Church.

CHARITABLE INVESTMENT BRINGS HEAVENLY RETURNS (INCOME)

God commands we invest these Talents of Love, Humility and Mercy in each other, with no exception. They profit our souls through practice, which, in turn, produces another talent called Peace. We must not bury these fruits of the Holy Spirit, in the sinful grave of anger, pride, selfishness, laziness or resentment. The *spindle* of Love, produces the garment of Mercy, which patches a broken relationship. We all have the power now, to imitate Jesus on the Cross, and forgive. On the day Nelson Mandela was released from prison, after serving twenty seven years, for an unjust crime, he said, *As I stand before the door to my freedom, I realise that if I do not leave my anger, my bitterness and my pain behind me, I will still be in prison*. Forgiveness does not make us weak, but sets us free from sin. If I have not spent my talent forgiving others, then how can I expect Jesus to forgive me? Our tongues and lips are also Talents, given to us to praise God and speak charitably of our neighbour. *O God open my lips and my tongue shall announce Your praise* (Psalm 51:15 and Rosary). To use our tongue as a vicious gossiping tool, is to kill our neighbour's character, and bury that Talent.

LOVE PROFITS THROUGH PRACTICE

God expects us to employ all Talents given to us, while working in His service. He will not tolerate anyone who buries these gifts. Like the three servants, we do not all have gifts to the same degree. But the return God expects of us, corresponds with the gifts He gives us. The two servants who did well are rewarded in different amounts. But they are both praised identically with the words, *Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness*. The implication of the parable is that we are to use whatever Talents God gives us, drawn from the Church, to the best of our ability and for His Glory. If we show fidelity and can be trusted with our Christian duty on earth, then God promises, to trust us with even greater duties, in the happiness of Heaven.

GOD CONDEMNS LAZINESS BUT REWARDS CHARITABLE ACTIONS

The servant who received one talent was not condemned for failing to reach the five-talent goal, but he was condemned for doing nothing with what he was given. The point of the parable is that we are to use whatever we have been given for God's purposes. The severe judgement and eternal life sentence handed down to the unproductive lazy servant, teaches us that we are expected to spend charitably of ourselves. St. Faustina of Divine Mercy says that, *Love does not consist in words or feelings, but in deeds. It is an act of our freewill and is a gift [for a talent] of Giving. Diary 392*. If somebody is reading this, knowing God is calling you, to be a Priest, Religious Brother or Nun, but have chosen to bury this Vocation. Please reconsider, and dig up that buried Treasure in your heart and get to work! God bless, Fr. Brendan