

Lectio Divina of 33rd Sunday in ordinary time A (11/15/2020)

"LORD, WHAT I AM IS YOUR GIFT TO ME AND WHAT I BECOME IS MY GIFT TO YOU"

Opening prayer: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we praise you and thank you and praise you for showering Your abundant blessings upon us. We want to bloom where we are planted. What we are is your gift and what we become is our gift to you. Thank you for making us just as we are. Give us the grace to resist the temptation to compare ourselves to others. Help us to see the ways you have uniquely gifted us to serve you and your Kingdom. Forgive us for the ways we have compared ourselves and envied the abilities of others. We pray that we would see the opportunities in front of us to use our gifts and abilities for the edification, enhancement and empowerment of our local and parish church and for the spiritual growth of our persons and family members. In Jesus' Holy Name we pray, Amen.

First Reading: A reading from the book of Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and works with loving hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her a reward for her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates

The word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God

Commentary:The woman described in this chapter has outstanding abilities for anyone to follow, presenting her with strong character, great wisdom, many skills and great compassion. Some have the mistaken idea that the ideal women the Bible is retiring, servile and entirely domestic. Not so. This woman is an excellent wife and mother. She is also a manufacturer, importer, manager, realtor, farmer and merchant. Her strength and dignity are the result of her severance for God.

Responsorial Psalm: 128 "Blessed are those who fear the Lord"

Blessed are you who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways! For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; blessed shall you be, and favored.

R. **Blessed are those who fear the Lord.**

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your home; Your children like olive plants around your table. R. **Blessed are those who fear the Lord.**

Behold, thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD. The LORD bless you from Zion: may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. R. **Blessed are those who fear the Lord.**

Commentary: The Psalmist writes that a good family life is a reward for following God. The values outlined in God's word include love, service, honesty, integrity and prayer. These help all relationships and they are vital to home life. Fear of God and love of God's word make our family holy and homely.

Second Reading: A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians 5:1-6

Concerning times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night. When people are saying, "Peace and security," then sudden disaster comes upon them, like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert and sober.

The word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.

Commentary: "Times and seasons" refers to the knowledge of what will happen in the future, specifically to the return of Christ. Efforts to determine the date of Christ's return are foolish. We should not be misled by anyone who claims to know the day of the Lord. St. Paul tells us that no one knows the day of the Lord and it will be a surprise for every believer when the Lord comes suddenly and unexpectedly like a thief. Hence, we should be ready at all times, living each day prepared to welcome Christ.

Gospel Reading: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew: Mt 25:14-30

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.'"

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Meditation: Today's Gospel poses few soul seeking questions: how do I use God's grace and blessings in my life? Am I using them primarily to serve Him and glorify Him? How do I use my talents? Am I using my time, talents, gifts, opportunities and resources to enhance my family, friends and the society at large? Having these questions in mind, let us meditate the gospel. The rich man in the parable entrusted talents to three of his slave servants, each according to his personal ability: Five, Two, and One. A talent was a very large amount. These amounts were enormous to these slaves who had nothing. Through skillful trading and investing, the slave with the five talents managed to make five more, doubling his master's money. The slave with the two talents did the same. The third slave buried his talent in the ground. He was afraid to take the risk and he was afraid of his master. On the day of accounting, the master rewarded the two clever slaves but punished the third slave whom he called "wicked and slothful". He took the third slave's talent and gave it to the first slave. He exposed the third slave's irresponsibility and laziness. He further points out that this slave could have easily invested his one talent in the bank and gained interest instead of burying it in the ground.

Make use of your talents: God has given each of us different gifts and he expects us to give our gifts back to Him and His children in loving service. We read in Rom 12:6-8 "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully". This is simply responsible stewardship. Everything that we have is God's gift. We are only asked to make full use of what we have been uniquely given and to use our talents for the benefit of the community as a whole. We are rewarded with more responsibilities when we make the best use of God-given talents. If we are blessed with spiritual gifts such as encouragement and teaching, financial resources, good health, time, talents like singing, dancing, teaching, nursing, caretaking, cooking, gardening, cleaning, repairing, we should ask God for wisdom on how to use those resources constructively and concretely for His glory and His people.

Be creative William G. T. Shedd says "A ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are built for". The ship has to get out its comfort zone, the harbor, carry as much as people possible, travel to new places and finally its destinations. Let us not make lame excuses because no one likes excuses: A study shows that an average person complains 30 times a day. We tend to complain more and make excuses. The first two slaves spoke less and work more. They were more industrious and productive but the third slave was a mere chatter box, doing nothing. Helen Keller, the famous American author and lecturer says, "I cried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet". How many shining stars and inspiring personalities in our midst who have physical disabilities? The famous violinist Perlman who had polio attack, Tony Melendez, the famous guitarist from Nicaragua who plays his guitar with his toes as he has no hands, Andrea Bocelli, a Blind singer from Italy whose voice soothes the ears of millions. These people could have easily excused themselves with their disabilities. But the word 'impossible' was not there in their dictionary. They are people of life and optimism, living longer and making everyone happier.

Make responsible stewardship We need to make use of our talents in our parish in addition to our homes and families. We are called to give an account of our spiritual stewardship in our Sunday and weekday liturgy and in various parish ministries. We should make an assessment of ourselves: where can I fit in my parish ministry? Community service? Home making? Let us not forget that we are filled with the abundant grace of God. We have the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Sacraments, the Holy Scripture, the Holy Catholic Church, the Holy Mother Mary and what else do we need to reciprocate our Christian faith and stewardship?

Concluding prayer: God of love and of life, We thank you for the many gifts you have given us. We know that all our blessings come from you. May we be willing to reach out to others and share all that we have been blessed with. It is in helping others that we gain joy and fulfillment here on Earth. May our education help us discover where our strengths and interests lie. May our faith guide us in realizing our gifts. May we always be open to the direction of the Spirit and never forget the love you have for each of us. Give us, O Lord, the perception we need to look within ourselves and discover the beauty and gifts we possess. Give us the courage to show others the talents they have. Help us serve others in the community and in so doing build up your kingdom. we pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. May we always feel the presence of the Holy Spirit directing us and guiding us. We pray for the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We know that these fruits are life's greatest blessings. May we use these blessings to help others find faith in your Word. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen (Hail Mary/ Blessing)