

Lectionary Faith-Sharing Community

**33RD ORDINARY SUNDAY**

Cycle A – November 15, 2020



**OPENING PRAYER**

Leader: *I love you, O Lord, my strength,*

All: **O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.**

Leader: *My God, my rock of refuge,  
my shield, the source of my salvation, my stronghold!*

All: **I exclaim "praised be the Lord" and I am safe from my enemies.**

Leader: *Let us invoke the presence of God:*

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**

**O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit have instructed the hearts of the faithful grant that by the same Spirit we may truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations.**



**FIRST READING** [ 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 book of Proverbs has a series of sayings full of wisdom that reflect the degree of cultural development that Israel experienced in times of peace and prosperity. They refer to matters of daily life, seen from the perspective of a person who believes in God. The final fragment of the book is composed as an alphabetic poem (the first letter of each line follows the order of the Hebrew alphabet). In our language this type of poem is called acrostic but in this case, as it was composed in Hebrew, we cannot detect this form of composition.

This fragment praises the ideal woman, according to the criteria of the Jewish society of the time. If we read carefully, the accent falls on the virtues of good sense, industriousness, constant concern for the family, and generosity to the poor. Surely, in his time, this passage served to instruct young people when it came time to choose a wife. Over time, when studied within the context of the Bible, it is also associated with the symbolic image of Wisdom.

As this fragment has been chosen to accompany the Gospel of the day, the intention is to make us reflect on what we should consider for life. What should we put the emphasis on? Being clear about what is expected of us, whether we will act foolish or wise.

(1) What words or expressions have caught your attention?

(2) The reading says that "such a woman is far superior to pearls in her value." Read Matthew 13 (45-46) and comment

(3) In what lies the beauty of this woman? What does she get in exchange for her way of being?

**SECOND READING** [ 1 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 message of this second reading is added to that of the Gospel in the sense that it makes us reflect on the last times. Last Sunday, the Gospel ended with the phrase "because you don't know the day or the hour," and that is why the image of the arrival of a thief at night or of the labor pains of a pregnant woman fits appropriately. In none of these cases would we dare to think that such events could be negotiated for the next day. When they arrive, they arrive. So it will be with the second coming of the Lord. There won't be time to catch up on what we didn't want to do when we had time. Latinos have an expression that we say almost without thinking: "May God catch us confessed!" that we could reflect in the light of this reading to get the most out of it.

As Christians, we cannot live in fear of the last day. On the contrary, those who live and know their faith cannot have reason to be afraid or worried: the believer is a "child of light" and no longer lives in darkness, so they could not be surprised by what can come without prior notice.

(1) If you knew that the day after tomorrow is the last day of your life, what would you do differently tomorrow at work? In your home? With your family and friends? Here in the Church?

(2) Do you understand what Saint Paul says that we are 'children of light'? What does this expression mean?

**GOSPEL** [ Matthew 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.'"***

Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew collects several texts of eschatological theme, which insist on the need to remain vigilant to be ready when the Lord returns. The parable of the talents invites us to consider that what we receive from God is not for our exclusive and private use.

We see that God gives up the talents and then leaves man alone, master of his actions and of his time. The Lord gives opportunity to the development of the talents granted. The emphasis is on the third employee. Here the dialogue is more extensive and detailed. This is where Jesus wants to emphasize, because many of us can feel identified with the selfish behavior of this third character. The intention is that we review ourselves, while we have time, before rendering accounts, lest something similar happen to us. We have received talents, but we have also heard the Word of God, even more valuable than the most stupendous of talents. What we are doing with this knowledge, with this wealth, depends only on us, not on God. We must not only listen to it, but welcome it, and make it bear fruit so that others may also be beneficiaries of the Lord's gifts.

Nothing that we receive from God, be it talents, be it fortunes, be it opportunities in life, be it the divine Word and the Grace that comes to us through the sacraments, are for our personal and exclusive benefit. God is using us to benefit others. We are simply stewards of God's riches.

- (1) Try to remember the blessings that God has showered on you through other people. Are you aware that these favors come from God and not from men?
- (2) Try to remember the times when due to some selfishness of yours, others could not receive the kind of blessings that you have received. What can you do to correct this situation?
- (3) Let each person in the group try to identify the talents that they observe in someone else in the group.
- (4) Those who multiplied their talents took a risk. It seems that Jesus wants to contrast "quietism" with risk. Does spiritual growth imply a risk?
- (5) "Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten" says the text. What do you think Jesus meant by "... for whoever has, more will be given ... and whoever has little will be taken away ..."?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Leader: *Lord of the day and night, of the beginning and of the end: At the closing of this meeting, once again we lift up our hearts to You, divine source of all life.*

All: **We thank you for the gifts you have bestowed on us. We thank you for the love expressed in companionship and understanding, mutual respect and shared ideas. We give you thanks for your holy power that will help us in our concerns that we have shared. For these and all the gifts that come from You, we give you thanks.**

Leader: *Lord hear our prayers* (attendees may propose their own petitions to God)

All: **In the same way in which we have being blessed by your presence as we met, we ask now to bless our safe return to our homes. May your holy blessing be over us + in the name of the Father and of the Son .....**

Leader: *May the King of the eternal glory gather us together in His heavenly banquet. Amen.*

