

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – NOVEMBER 15, 2020

## Dear Parishioners and Families,

The Parable told by Jesus and recounted today by Matthew possesses a very clear message. Take your **talent, trade** with it and give the Master **growth**. Let me use the three words, **Talent, Trade, Growth**.

So often Jesus tells the Jewish Community parables using the context of money. This still strikes home today. The use of the financial term talent, which meant a considerable amount of money, is also in the English language talent means special gifts that each human person has. We are born with talents and these we need to nurture.

Every parent labors with this thought for their children. What special **Talent** does my child have that he or she can present before the world.

Let me take the second word **Trade**. Trade refers to not being in isolation. You trade or labor with others. None of us can live alone successfully. We need others around us to trade.

This parish has multiple talents and we all trade together to make it successful. Why has this parish existed for 189 years and the school for 188 years? You have traded together and used your talents.

**Growth**. There are always forces working against growth. There is the natural force of time which wears everything down gradually. There are weeds that grow within the crop and draw nourishment away from the wheat and the grain. Growth does not come without personal effort.

In the parable the Master measured both talent and the trade by the growth. “By their fruit you shall know them.” Now I presume the fruit is good fruit, digestible and edible. God judges results. God doesn’t ask exactly how you trade or with whom you cooperate, but judges primarily the results. So today we ask the question, **Talent, Trade, and Growth**. How have each one of us measured up.

### **Responding to COVID 19 with Flexibility and Concern**

Pope Francis last year just before Christmas spoke about rigidity as a confining element for the Church. He appealed for flexibility. It would seem that God amplified his message by allowing COVID 19 to assault the earth.

Clearly, individual persons have various susceptibilities to COVID 19, fear, and protective measures taken. I deeply trust the Holy Spirit in guiding each family in their decisions at this time. We as a parish cannot take either the most liberal or the most constrictive approach to COVID 19. The first could make us a contributor to the virus and the second could isolate us to a standstill. Fortunately, our school has taken the middle road and it has been magnificently successful with the cooperation of the parents.

We shall not judge others. Accept the individuality and the individual approach that the Holy Spirit guides in each one of us. We are unified in the fact that the same Holy Spirit guides us individually and somewhat differently, but wisely.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.  
November 15, 2020