

NOVEMBER 19, 2017



THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



PROVERBS 31:10–13, 19–20, 30–31

PSALM 128:1–2, 3, 4–5

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1–6

MATTHEW 25:14–30 OR 25:14–15, 19–21

REFLECTION

The parable of the talents focuses on our need to use the gifts God has given to us. St. Paul writes that each of us is given charisms or spiritual gifts (talents) at Baptism and that Christians should use them for the common good, for the Kingdom of God. This parable expands Paul's theology about our God given gifts. The first two servants use the talents given to them by the master and produce positive results. But the third servant, because he is afraid of the master, buries his talents in the ground. When the master returns the first and the second servants are praised, but the third servant is cast out into the darkness. He is cast out of God's Kingdom, where there will be "wailing and grinding of teeth" (v. 30). The first lesson is clear. A criterion for eternal life is using our gifts to bring about the Kingdom, and if we don't do this we are in big trouble.

But perhaps the second lesson is even more important. The second lesson is about what fear does to us. We know keenly that fear can stop us from being our true selves. We too often wear masks to fit in and belong. These masks often hide our true identity. Too often the fear of not belonging trumps being our true self. Sometimes we do things that we know are wrong simply to fit in. The result of this is similar to what happens to the third servant. Over time, denying our true selves casts us into darkness.

ACTION

List three things that help you come alive when you do them—the things that make it feel like time stops as you are fully absorbed in the activity. This can be anything from playing soccer to playing the French horn, from reading a book to talking to friends. Then consider how you could use one of these talents to help others in need. For example, if you love soccer, could you coach soccer to small children? Perhaps you could volunteer to teach children fundamental soccer skills. But perhaps you are afraid to volunteer like the third servant in the parable. The challenge is to face this fear, to use your gifts to help others.



JOURNALING QUESTIONS



● What are your gifts or talents? What do you love doing? How could you use these talents to help others? What fear is preventing you from doing this? Are you willing to take a risk?