

Saturday of the Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (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.'"**

“A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them”

Fr. Albert SOLS i Lúcia
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we contemplate the parable of the talents. Here, we can appreciate something like a change of style in Jesus' message: the announcement of the Kingdom is no longer limited to point out its nearness but to the description of its contents through stories: it is the time of the parables!

A great man sets out to start a long trip, and entrusts his assets to his servants. He might have distributed them equally, but he preferred not to. He gave each one according to his abilities (five, two and one). Each servant could capitalize with that money the beginning of a good business. The first two servants did well administering their deposits, but the third one —through fear or laziness— preferred to hide it away and forego any investment: he chose the comfort of his own poverty.

The master came back... and asked for a reckoning. He rewarded the courage and foresight of the two first servants that were able to duplicate his entrusted deposits. But the treatment to the “cautious” servant was very different.

Two thousand years later the message of this parable is still very much applicable. Modern democracies are moving towards a progressive separation between Church and State, which is not bad; rather on the contrary. However, this global and progressive mentality hides a secondary effect, which may be dangerous for us Christians: to become the living image of that third servant whom the master (biblical figure of God Father) scolded with great severity. Without any malice, just out of comfort or fear, we are running the risk of hiding away and reducing our

Christian faith to the private environment of our family and intimate friends. The Gospel should not be limited to a reading and sterile contemplation. With courage and risk, we have to manage our Christian vocation in our own social and professional environment, while proclaiming the figure of Christ with words and examples.

St. Augustine says: “Those of us who preach the word of God to the people are not so far away from human condition and from the thinking supported by faith that we may not realize our own dangers. But we are consoled by the fact that where our risk lies because of our Christian ministry, we have the help of your prayers.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“For a little of this pure love is more precious to God and the soul and more beneficial to the Church, even though it seems one is doing nothing, than all these other works put together”
(Saint John of the Cross)

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“The Lord does not give everyone the same things and in the same way: he knows us personally and entrusts to us what is right for us; but He places the same immense trust in all of us. Let's not let him down!” (Francis)

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“These differences belong to God's plan, who wills that each receive what he needs from others, and that those endowed with particular "talents" share the benefits with those who need them...”
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1937)