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

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Today, we reflect on the Parable of the Talents. In Jesus' teaching we notice a shift in His style: no longer does He simply proclaim that the Kingdom is near, but now He begins to describe its very substance through stories. It is the hour of parables!

A wealthy man prepares to go on a long journey and entrusts his servants with all his possessions. He could have divided them equally, but He chose not to. Instead, He gave to each according to his ability—five talents, two talents, and one talent. With that money, each servant had the opportunity to begin a fruitful enterprise. The first two immediately set to work, investing and managing what had been entrusted to them. But the third—out of fear, or perhaps out of laziness—chose to bury his share, avoiding all risk. He hid away in the comfort of his own poverty.

When the master returned, he called for an accounting (cf. Mt 25:19). He praised and rewarded the courage of the first two, who had doubled what was given to them. But the treatment of the so-called "prudent" servant was very different.

The lesson of this parable is as timely today as ever. The gradual separation of Church and State is not in itself a bad thing—indeed, it can be for the good. Yet this global and progressive mindset carries a hidden danger for Christians: that we become like that third servant, the one whom the master—an image of God the Father—rebuked so harshly. Without malice, perhaps simply out of fear or complacency, we risk hiding our Christian faith and reducing it to the private sphere of family and close friends. But the Gospel cannot remain merely a text to be read or a sterile object of contemplation. We must manage and "invest" our Christian vocation with courage and even with risk, proclaiming Christ in our social and professional lives—through both our words and the witness of our lives.

Saint Augustine comments on those who have to preach the word of God to his various peoples: "Nor are we, such strangers to common humanity and faithful reflection, that we are unaware of our own danger when we do so. However, he gives us the reassurance that while we are put in danger by our ministry, we are aided by your prayers."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "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)

- “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)

- “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)