Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

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.'"

"For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich"

Fr. Antoni POU OSB Monk of Montserrat
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Today, Jesus tells us another parable of judgment. We are approaching the Advent season, and therefore, the end of the liturgical year is near.

By giving us life, God has also provided us with the possibility - smaller or greater - for personal, ethical, and religious development. It doesn't matter if one has much or little; what matters is that what we have received has yielded some profit. The man in our parable, who hides his talent for fear of the master, has not known how to take risks: “But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's Money” (Mt 25:18). Maybe the core of the parable is this: we must conceive a God that motivates us to go beyond ourselves, who encourages us to live freely for the Kingdom of God.

The word 'talent' in this parable - which is nothing more than a weight denoting about 30 Kg of silver - has become so influential that it is even used in popular language to refer to a person's abilities. But the parable does not exclude that the talents God has given us are not only our possibilities but also our limitations. What we are and what we have, that is the material with which God wants to make a new reality of us.

The phrase “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” (Mt 25:29), is not, naturally, a maxim to encourage consumption, but can only be understood in terms of love and generosity. Indeed, if we respond to God's gifts by trusting in His help, then we will experience that it is actually Him who is paying the interest on the investment: “In the stories of so many simple, kindly folk whom faith has made good, we see after all that faith has a very positive effect… And, conversely, we must note that, with the dimming of the light of faith, society has become harder…” (Benedict XVI).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Brothers, it is necessary that you pay the utmost attention to preserving love in everything you must do” (Saint Gregory the Great)

- “Let us live for the Lord and base our life on love, as Jesus did: we will be able to savor authentic joy, and our life will not be barren; it will be fruitful” (Francis)

- “The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom… they contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were "put

in charge of many things." Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2,683)