Wednesday of the Thirty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 19:11-28): While people were listening to Jesus speak, he proceeded to tell a parable because he was near Jerusalem and they thought that the Kingdom of God would appear there immediately.

So he said, “A nobleman went off to a distant country to obtain the kingship for himself and then to return. He called ten of his servants and gave them ten gold coins and told them, ‘Engage in trade with these until I return.’ His fellow citizens, however, despised him and sent a delegation after him to announce, ‘We do not want this man to be our king.’ But when he returned after obtaining the kingship, he had the servants called, to whom he had given the money, to learn what they had gained by trading. The first came forward and said, ‘Sir, your gold coin has earned ten additional ones.’ He replied, ‘Well done, good servant! You have been faithful in this very small matter; take charge of ten cities.’ Then the second came and reported, ‘Your gold coin, sir, has earned five more.’ And to this servant too he said, ‘You, take charge of five cities.’ Then the other servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your gold coin; I kept it stored away in a handkerchief, for I was afraid of you, because you are a demanding man; you take up what you did not lay down and you harvest what you did not plant.’ He said to him, ‘With your own words I shall condemn you, you wicked servant. You knew I was a demanding man, taking up what I did not lay down and harvesting what I did not plant; why did you not put my money in a bank? Then on my return I would have collected it with interest.’ And to those standing by he said, ‘Take the gold coin from him and give it to the servant who has ten.’ But they said to him, ‘Sir, he has ten gold coins.’ He replied, ‘I tell you, to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Now as for those enemies of mine who did not want me as their king, bring them here and slay them before me.’”

After he had said this, he proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem.

“Engage in trade with these until I return”

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Today, the Gospel presents us with the parable of the pounds—a sum of money that a nobleman entrusted to his servants before going on a journey. Let us first look at the context that prompted Jesus to tell this parable. He was “going up” to Jerusalem, where His Passion and Resurrection awaited Him. The disciples “thought that the Kingdom of God would appear there immediately” (Lk 19:11). It is in this situation that Jesus tells the parable. Through it, He teaches us that we must make fruitful the gifts and talents He has given us—or better said, has entrusted to each of us. They are not “ours” in such a way that we may do with them whatever we please. He has left them to us so that we may make them bear fruit. Those who have done so—whether more or less—are praised and rewarded by their Master. It is the lazy servant, who kept the money wrapped in a cloth and did nothing with it, who is rebuked and condemned.

The Christian, then, must certainly await the return of his Lord, Jesus. But there are two conditions, if we wish that encounter to be a friendly one. The first is to reject the unhealthy curiosity of wanting to know the exact hour of the Lord’s solemn and victorious return. In another passage He says that He will come when we least expect it. Therefore, let us set aside all such speculation! We wait with hope—but a trusting hope, not one tainted by vain curiosity. The second condition is not to waste time. The expectation of that joyful encounter and final fulfillment must never become an excuse for neglecting the present moment. In fact, the joy of that final meeting will be all the greater the more each of us has contributed to the cause of the Kingdom during this earthly life.

Here, too, we find Jesus’ grave warning to those who rebel against Him: “As for those enemies of mine who did not want me as their king, bring them here and slay them before me” (Lk 19:27).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “When a Christian kills time on this earth, he is putting himself in danger of 'killing Heaven' for himself” (Saint Josemaria)

- “Any environment, even the furthest and most impractical, can become a place where our talents can bear fruit. There are no situations or places precluded from the Christian presence and witness.” (Francis)

- “... Each man is established as an "heir" and receives certain "talents" that enrich his identity and whose fruits he must develop. He rightly owes loyalty to the communities of which he is part...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n 1880)