

Homily. 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. A. 18/19 November 2023.

Fear is our enemy. It cripples our freedom, robs us of hope and joy and destroys our capacity to think and act. Faith is our friend. It counteracts all of the damaging effects of fear, replacing them with confidence in ourselves and in power of love, hope and kindness. Without faith in God, in others and in our fundamental human goodness, fear wins out, always.

The three servants were given a number of their Master's talents, each according to their ability. They knew that they were to make good use of this endowment while he was away. They also knew that when he returned there would be an accounting, a reckoning of what they had done and achieved or otherwise failed to do with his gifts.

Two of them made the best of their trust-gift and one didn't. This servant let himself become caught up in his fears. This crippled his faith, ruined his confidence in himself, in his fellow servants and in the gift his Master thought him worthy to receive. Some might think that he was a bit of a lost cause anyway because he only got one talent, but this is wrong. Perhaps his one talent was the most important and valuable of them all. His gift may have been in peacemaking, desperately needed, or perhaps in helping the needy or healing our wounded and abused environment.

It never about how many abilities and talents we've got, for even if only one it could well be the most necessary of them all. In any case, forget the number, for whatever we've received we are to use it wisely and well, trusting in God's confidence in us, with faith in ourselves and others.

St. Paul says this well when he writes that we aren't like other people who live in and act out of the darkness of fear, valuing only their own personal comfort and self-preservation. No, he says, we are God's children of the light and the day. We don't belong anymore to the night or the darkness.

God trusts us, believes in us, having faith in us who have welcomed the light of the good-news of Jesus Christ. Like the Master in the parable, God has gifted each of us in different ways and in various measures. Our talents are given us by God on trust. Because of our faith in the Lord and his Spirit living in us, which counteracts and dispels the blindness and night of fear, we are to put our gifts to work for what God wants to do.

In this, our model is the way of Jesus himself and our exemplars are seen in the the lives and witness of the Saints, the Holy Church of our sisters and brothers in Heaven still urging us onwards. Having discerned our entrusted gifts, right now is the time to get them working for everyone here and for all those people beyond this Church who are crying out for the healing, hope, mercy and peace we can offer.

The time for any hesitation, hiding and burying away is ended. This is our time to act, to commit, to get involved with each other and to help bring the light of the Lord's day to those we meet and greet, confident in the knowledge that the Lord is with us and will not fail us in our service.