

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 13, 2005

Readings: Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-6; Matthew 25: 14-30

Homily: Sister Cecilia Canales, OP

This week's Gospel reminds me of my school days when I would come home with my report card. If your parents were like mine, they would look, not only at the grades, but also at conduct and effort. If I had an "A" in conduct and effort, that made the subject grade acceptable. They seemed to feel that doing my best is what mattered the most, and that was the lesson they wanted me to learn. Like the king in Jesus' story, they wanted me to utilize all my intellectual ability and give myself completely to fulfilling my responsibility in life. They didn't expect perfection, but consistency and faithful attention to task.

I don't think failure would have wrought the same punishment as the servant who buried his talent in the ground received. They would not have thrown me "into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth!" But they made it clear to me that trying my best was how to live a good life, and I saw it modeled in how they approached their work. I am grateful to my parents for this lesson, and I strive to live this out in my own adult life. Family life, society, all institutions depend on people fulfilling their responsibilities, and they thrive when people do so wholeheartedly. The wife in the first reading is praised precisely for this reason. She did nothing extraordinary, but her goodness would be praised at the city gates!

Jesus told the parable about the talents for a reason. Too many times we are afraid to try out our gifts because we may fail. (Failure is un-American, it seems.) We bury our talents instead, but God gave them to us because the world needs us to "be all we can be." (Wasn't that some advertiser's slogan? Regardless, it is true.) The world depends on each of us to be our **true** selves, our Godly selves. What if I refused to be a loving person? Who would lose out? Who would go to bed without a smile or a kind word? Or, what if the people who loved me had made that choice, and I was the one left wanting!? We are each an important person in God's plan for this world. You and I matter! How we live matters! Whether or not we share all the gifts we have been given with the world matters!

We are each free to choose to live in the light or in the darkness, as St. Paul says. We know what it means to walk in the light as disciples of Jesus. We know that God chooses to work through us to be Christ's hands and feet and voice and ears in the world today. We have been entrusted with bringing about the reign of God. So, it does **not** matter if "the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night," for we are children of the light. God will recognize us as daughters and sons, will see the Christ in us and will say to us, "Well done, my good and faithful servant!" The fulness of life is ours!