

Reflecting
on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time



Archdiocese of
Liverpool

Prepare to be attentive to *The God Who Speaks in this story.*



- Light a candle or tea light if possible.
- Perhaps place a flower from the garden or a plant next to the light.

Let us begin our time of prayer for the Thirty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Breathe deeply and allow yourself to become still.

Let the music help you to relax. Ask for God's grace and light to fill your heart and your mind as you open to the Word.



Take, O take me as I am
Summon out what I shall be
Set your seal upon my heart and live in me



Spend some time just looking at the three images.

- Where is your eye drawn to?
- What feelings are you experiencing?
- What are you noticing?



Talents



Use them!

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Pray the Responsorial Psalm for today.



O blessed are those who fear the Lord.

O blessed are those who fear the Lord
and walk in his ways!
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper.

O blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive,
around your table.

O blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the Lord.
May the Lord bless you from Zion
all the days of your life!

O blessed are those who fear the Lord.

**Now, either read slowly to yourself this story
from the Gospel according to Matthew or better
still, read it aloud, again slowly.**

From the Gospel according to Matthew 25:14-30



'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them and made five more talents. In

the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return, I would have received what was my own with interest. So, take the talent from him and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Spend a few moments allowing some aspect of the Gospel – a word/phrase or image – to touch you more deeply and read this part a second time, aloud if possible.

This reflection is from Chris Thomas of the Irenaeus Project.



In 1957 my cousin Betty emigrated to Canada. She went with her husband and two children to start a new life. Her mother Sadie decided that she would go as well. Aunt Sadie was 68 and told Betty she was coming with her so that she wouldn't die by herself in England. On the way to Canada Aunt Sadie became very ill and was taken off the plane and spent two weeks in Boston. When she arrived in Toronto, she was a very sad lady who thought she would simply exist there until she died. Family stories tell me that Aunt Sadie had been a fine woman in England. She had brought up her family well. She was an accomplished person who played the piano, was well read and was always the life and soul of the party. She made lace and crochet. In Canada she sat in the chair and didn't use any of her gifts, despite the fact that she was asked on many occasions to show others how to do the things that she could do. Sadie lived until she was ninety-one and died a very sad old lady, for whom life in Canada had been far less than it could have been. If only she had used the gifts she had been given!

Matthew's Gospel is the only one of the Gospels to reflect on Church. Matthew wants his community to have the best experience of Church that it can. He knows the truth that this will only happen when those who make up the Church use their gifts for its upbuilding. Unless we're prepared to use that which we have been given to bring life to our communities,

then those communities will be less than they could be. So, he tells the story of the talents to try and encourage members of his community to use the gifts they've been given.

A friend of mine often says that she doesn't have any gifts to use and I guess many people feel like that. Matthew makes it very clear that the truth is, every one of us has a gift even if that gift seems very small in comparison to the gifts of others. "To one he gave ten talents, to another five, to another one." Whether you have one talent or ten, you are very important.

The Second Vatican Council picked up that truth when it acknowledged the Baptismal calling and vocation of every person, lay and clergy alike. Our own Archbishop Worlock said of the Council, 'the Second Vatican Council was a powerful call for renewal spiritually, liturgically, socially and politically. It was the occasion for new insights and understanding of the nature of the Church, of shared responsibility, of true relationships between distinct ministries, of equality, of dignity of all in the sight of God, and of the need to reach out with the good news of the gospel towards those bewildered or misled in a self-centred world.'

I wonder whether many of us priests and people alike have really reflected on those truths. We are each uniquely gifted. We all share in the responsibility to acknowledge our giftedness. We all share in the responsibility to use those gifts and whether we be priest, religious or lay person, we are equal in the sight of God and it is together that we build our church communities. A phrase that has come to mean a great deal to me is this; *none of us have it all together but all together we have it all.*

The Church is not bricks and mortar. The Church is a living body which will only become more alive if you use what God has given you. Don't run away from the challenge of the Gospel. Use your gifts and bring life to the Body of Christ.

Take a few moments to receive and reflect on this poem by Marianne Williamson.



Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness
That most frightens us.

We ask ourselves
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?
Actually, who are you *not* to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small
Does not serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
So that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine,
As children do.
We were born to make manifest
The glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us;
It's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,
We unconsciously give others permission to do the same.
As we're liberated from our own fear,
Our presence automatically liberates others.

As a result of your reflection, offer some prayers of intercession for the people and situations in our world today that seem to you to be most in need.

Let's begin with the prayer Archbishop Malcolm has asked us to pray at this time and then you may like to include one or more of prayers that follow and/or add your own:



God Our Father,
each person is precious to You.
You are the Giver of life.
Have mercy on us and protect us at this time,
as the coronavirus threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.
Watch over those who are suffering,
give strength to those who are aiding the sick
and give courage to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this of you in the name of your Son.
Jesus Christ.
Amen.

We pray for Pope Francis as he continues to inspire and challenge us with his teaching ... may he be supported in his ministry.

We pray for those who are struggling to cope with the restrictions of a second national lockdown ... may they find support and encouragement from neighbours and friends.

We pray for those who fail to use the gifts and talents they have been given, believing that they are not good enough ... that they will be affirmed and encouraged by those who live and work with them.

We pray for the sick, the lonely, the housebound and those who care for them ... may they experience God's presence in these challenging times.

We pray now in the words Jesus gave us:

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

To end your time of reflection listen to *We are called beyond.*



We are called to serve you, Jesus
Called beyond our daily lives
We are called to serve each other
To teach, evangelise
We are called by you who knows us
Who desires us to be free
By you, my Lord and Saviour
We are called, we are called
*We are called beyond all our fear. We are called
beyond all of our weakness
We are called to be one in the Body of Christ - We are
called, we are called*

In our thoughts and in our actions
May we embrace the gifts that you give
To follow as disciples
To model how to live
Lord, so many here are seeking
The message we can speak
Help us be forever humble
Be your messengers of peace

*We are called beyond all our fear. We are called
beyond all of our weakness
We are called to be one in the Body of Christ - We are
called, we are called*

Send new workers to your harvest
So we may reap what we will sow
With hearts filled with understanding
Your church on earth will grow
Pour your gifts on all believers
And on those called to follow your son
May we be forever faithful
For the Kingdom yet to come

*We are called beyond all our fear. We are called
beyond all of our weakness
We are called to be one in the Body of Christ - We are
called, we are called*

Lord, you call us as your holy people
To walk in the path of our faith
To give of ourselves to all people
In our service we praise and proclaim the Good News
to the world

May you touch and transform us
By the joy of unending love
With the pow'r of the Holy Spirit
Let us follow Christ, the Son
Sustain us on our journey
And give courage to us who learn
That by serving each other

We are servants of the Word
*We are called beyond all our fear. We are called beyond
all of our weakness
We are called to be one in the Body of Christ - We are
called, we are called*

Acknowledgements

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