

This Sunday's Counsel

THEME:

We imitate and witness the life of Christ the King by being responsible and accountable to bear fruit for God's kingdom.

PROMISE:

"Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy." (Mt 25: 21)

WORD:

Prv 31: 10-13, 19-20, 30-31/ Ps 128: 1-2, 3, 4-5/ 1 Thes 5: 1-6/ Mt 25: 14-30

ORDERS:

- *Therefore, do not sleep as the rest do, but stay alert and sober. (1 Thes 5: 6b)*
- *Be faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities, come share your master's joy. (Mt 25: 21b)*

DIRECTIONS:

- Always be prepared to use your gifts and talents to serve others for God's glory.
- Be fruitful in your ministry and you will be rewarded with inner joy.



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Be Fruitful Not Fearful

REFLECTION:

At the Last Judgment there are three questions we need to answer. First is, who is your God? Second is, who are you? And third is, what have you done? The first question is about faith. The second question is about character. And the third question is about works, in other words, what have you done with what God has given you? Your opportunities, your finances, your wisdom, your insight, your abilities? How we are to answer that last question depends on whether we consider what has been given to us as our own, to do whatever we please for our own selfish gratification or do we consider ourselves as stewards, to wisely use the gifts for God's Kingdom. Let me first review with you tonight's Theme: We imitate and witness the life of Christ the King by being responsible and accountable to bear fruit for God's kingdom. The very definition of being a steward is to be responsible and accountable.

The Gospel readings during this time of



the Liturgical year is mostly about the end times. So let us review what the Catechism of the Catholic Church comments about the Last Judgment. In paragraph 1039, it states: *"In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare. The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life."*

The Parable of the Talents is the last parable that

Jesus shares with his apostles in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus narrates this parable during Holy Week. As a matter of fact, in the next chapter (Mt 26), Judas is planning how to betray Jesus. Let us identify the characters represented in the story. The "man / master" is Jesus. The "servants" are Jesus' disciples of every generation. The "journey" is Jesus' ascension to the heavenly kingdom. "Talents" are the spiritual gifts which God gives every believer. The "settling of accounts" is the 2nd advent prior to the judgment. The "sharing of the master's joy" is the entrance into our

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Tending the Flack

Share In The Lord's Joy

Indeed, the servant who had hidden his talent and failed to make it increase in worth, had calculated badly. He behaved as if his master were never to return, as if there would never be a day on which he would be asked to account for his actions. With this parable Jesus wanted to teach his disciples to make good use of his gifts: God calls every person and offers talents to all, at the same time entrusting each one with a mission to carry out. It would be foolish to presume that these gifts are an entitlement, just as failing to use them would mean failing to achieve our purpose in life.

In commenting on this Gospel passage St. Gregory the Great noted that the Lord does not let anyone lack the gift of his charity, of his love. He wrote: *"brothers, it is necessary that you pay the utmost attention to preserving love in everything you must do"* (Homilies on the Gospel, 9, 6). After explaining that true charity consists in loving enemies as well as friends,

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Wisdom vs. Foolishness

All those bridesmaids are there to welcome the bridegroom, that is, they want to meet him, just as we too desire a happy fulfillment of life: the difference between wisdom and foolishness is therefore not in goodwill. Nor does it lie in the punctuality with which they arrive at the meeting: they were all there.

Let us look at ourselves, and we will see that our life runs the same risk: many times, we are very careful about our appearance – the important thing is to take good care of one's image, to make a good impression in front of others. But Jesus says that the wisdom of life lies elsewhere: in taking care of what cannot be seen, but which is more important, taking care of the heart. Nurturing the inner life.

~ Pope Francis

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Toms River, NJ 08754

The Lord's Provision

November 10, 2023

Tithe :\$565.00
Love Offering :\$354.00

Thank you for your generosity!!!

God's Blessings

Birthday

Yoyoy Quiapo	11/19	Adrienne Alquiros	11/22
Rolfe Retuya	11/19	Clemen Durante	11/23
Michael Bell	11/20	Judy Guerrero	11/23
Marichi Fune	11/20	Vincent Palecki	11/23
Dave Smith	11/21	Jeff Sarmiento	11/23

Anniversary

Brooksie & Ruby Brooks	11/19
Mike & Rouinna Crocco	11/20

Who Are You Gonna Call (or Text)?

For Mama Mary's visit - Beth Felibrico 732-995-7407
For Prayer Service - Mary Anne Arias 732-688-3962

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he added: "if someone lacks this virtue, he loses every good he possesses, he is deprived of the talent he received and is cast out into the darkness" (ibid.).

Dear brothers and sisters, let us accept the invitation to be watchful, of which the Scriptures frequently remind us! This is the attitude of those who know that the Lord will return and that he will wish to see the fruits of his love in us. Charity is the fundamental good that no one can fail to bring to fruition and without which every other good is worthless (cf. 1 Cor 13:3). If Jesus loved us to the point of giving his life for us (cf. 1 Jn 3:16), how can we not love God with the whole of ourselves and love one another with real warmth? (cf. 1 Jn 4:11). It is only by practicing charity that we too will be able to share in the joy of Our Lord. May the Virgin Mary teach us active and joyful watchfulness on our journey towards the encounter with God.

~ Pope Benedict XVI
Angelus Message, November 13, 2011

*Bless me, O Lord, that my wife
be like a fruitful vine,
my children like olive plants.*

A Thanksgiving Day Prayer

Father all-powerful, Your gifts of love are countless and Your goodness infinite. On Thanksgiving Day we come before You with gratitude for Your kindness: open our hearts to concern for our fellow men and women, so that we may share Your gifts in loving service.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



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eternal salvation in the life of the most Holy Trinity. And finally, "the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth" is the consignment into a state of eternal separation from God in Gehenna, in other words, hell!

Jesus knows each of us intimately and calibrates the gifts He gives to us according to our own capabilities, abilities, and measure of our faith. He does not dictate how we are to be productive. He leaves that to our own creativity. All He asks of us is our fidelity and commitment to collaborate, which is derived from the Latin, "co-labore", meaning to work with God and as today's theme states, to be fruitful for His kingdom. Our response to the challenge of how to be productive and fruitful is not to be fearful. Fear is exactly the reason why the 3rd servant loses everything. Out of fear, he hides the talents. He lets opportunity lay to waste. His cowardice and procrastination lead to worthlessness and thus, undeserving

of any share in his master's joy.

Jesus is not asking anything extraordinary from us as exemplified by the "Woman of Worth" from the 1st reading. The tasks that this woman performs are ordinary daily chores; however, she performs them extraordinarily. She is industrious, skillful, strong, generous, and persevering. The value of giving herself to her family is a treasure worth more than pearls, silver or gold.

In the second Reading from 1st Thessalonians, St Paul mentions about "the day of the Lord which will come like a thief in the night." This will be the time when we, God's people will be called to account for the responsibilities brought by the great blessings we have received. We do not know the time or the season of the final reckoning, but because we are "children of light and children of day" we must stay alert and sober. This reading is not meant to frighten us, but a mandate for us to place our daily lives in order and thus wash

away our fear and meet the coming of our Lord head-on with confidence.

In summary, our fruitfulness for the Kingdom of God is not about having abundant resources, but using what we have that reflects the love, justice, mercy, and generosity of God. We cannot be paralyzed by the thought of failure. The value and worth of a person are placed on the effort and not the result. As the saying goes, all God asks us to do is to plant the seed in His vineyard, and He will take care of the harvest. For example, as BLD members, how often have we been rejected when we invite our secular friends to Marriage Encounters and LSS? How many times have we been denied when we invite our friends to attend our Friday Praise and Worship? After all, Jesus did not accuse the lazy servant of theft, deception, or violence. He accused him of doing nothing. We must unite ourselves with God's purpose because that is what He created us for. This gives meaning to our lives.