

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

The day of the Lord is coming, Paul warns in today's Epistle. What matters isn't the time or the season, but what the Lord finds us doing with the new life and the graces He has given to us.

The Gospel parable offers us an economics lesson in proper investment for maximum return. Jesus applies this economic principle to the spiritual life. The spirit grows in you precisely in the measure that you invest it in love; precisely in the measure that you give it away. What you cannot do with the Spirit of God living within you is try to cling to it as your own personal possession. When you do that, it actually slips through your hands.

The life of God, the Spirit of God, the Love of God, our faith in God all grow within us according to the measure that we give them away.

By our baptism, He has entrusted to each of us a portion of His "possessions," a share in His divine life (see 2 Peter 1:4). He has given us talents and responsibilities, according to the measure of our faith (see Romans 12:3,8).

We are called to invest the gifts of life, love, spirit, and faith in others. This after all is the life of the Trinity. The Father is the Father precisely because he gives and invests his whole self in the Son and the Son is the Son because he invests His whole self in the Father. The Holy Spirit is the manifestation of this self-giving and self-investing love of the Father and the Son.

Our spiritual gifts, our talents, our treasure and time must be shared and shared generously; must be invested in the well-being of others. And thus they are multiplied within us and we grow into more perfect reflections of Our Heavenly Father and of His Son, Our Lord Jesus.

Jesus did not cling to his divine life but poured it out, invested it in each and every one of us on the Cross. How much of His life? All of it, every drop of his life is poured out on our behalf. In so doing He gives life to the whole Church, to the whole world.

All true saints throughout history follow this spiritual principle. So should we who are called to holiness, called to be saints. We must turn what we have received into something good for others. We must pour out our lives for the good of others.

We are to be like the worthy wife in today's First Reading, and the faithful man we sing of in today's Psalm. Like them, we should walk in the "fear of the Lord" - in reverence, awe, and thanksgiving for His marvelous gifts. This is the beginning of wisdom (see Acts 9:31; Proverbs 1:7).

This is not the "fear" of the useless servant in today's parable. His is the fear of a slave cowering before a cruel master, the fear of one who refuses the relationship that God calls us to.

He has called us to be trusted servants, fellow workers (see 1 Corinthians 3:9), using our talents to serve one another and His kingdom as good stewards of His grace (see 1 Peter 4:10).

In this, we each have a different part to play.

I conclude by offering a fundamental teaching of the Catholic Church, perhaps forgotten over time: the corporal and spiritual works of mercy that have been encouraged throughout the life and history of the Church. These are concrete ways to pour out our lives for the good of the world.

7 Corporal Works of Mercy:

- To feed the hungry
- To give drink to the thirsty
- To clothe the naked
- To shelter the homeless
- To visit the imprisoned
- To visit the sick
- To bury the dead

7 Spiritual Works of Mercy:

- To instruct the ignorant
- To counsel the doubtful
- To admonish sinners
- To bear wrongs patiently
- To forgive offenses willingly
- To comfort the afflicted
- To pray for the living and the dead

So let us resolve again in this Eucharist to make much of what we've been given, to do all for the glory of God—that we, too, may approach our Master with confidence and love when He comes to settle accounts with each of us.

- Fr. David M. Chiantella