33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (2014)

Theme: **Accountability**

Readings: Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31 / 1 Thess. 5:1-6/ Matthew 25:14-30

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

In everyday language, we often limit talents to natural gifts and skills. The use of talents in today’s gospel reading, however, means more than natural gifts and skills. At the time Jesus Christ told this parable, a talent was the annual gross salary of an ordinary worker. Jesus was however not limiting his message to the use of money. Rather, he intended his parable to relay the following lessons to us: (a) as the master entrusted his money to his servants, so God has made some investments in each of us; (b) as the master gave different amounts of money (5, 3 and 1 talents) to the servants, so God has given different “amounts” of his graces and blessings to us; (c) as each servant received at least a talent, so no one is without a favour from God; and (d) as each servant was expected to account for the amount given him so God expects accountability from each of us.

1. ***God’s Investments***: God has invested in us life, natural gifts and skills, opportunities, education/training, job, material wealth, good health, family/marriage, positions, social status, faith, other spiritual gifts, as well as countless other blessings and graces.
2. ***Different Amounts***: We do not all possess the same “amounts” and qualities of these blessings and graces that invests in human beings. Nonetheless, he has given each of us sufficient blessings and graces.
3. ***At least one talent***: If a talent was originally the annual gross salary of a worker, then the servant who was given one talent had enough money to invest, instead of burying the money. Similarly, God gives each of us sufficient blessings and graces. No one can say that God has not blessed him/her with a “talent”; at least, he/she cannot deny the fact that he/she has the gift of life.
4. ***Accountability***: If the servant who was given 5 talents made a profit of 5 more talents, and the one who received 2 made a profit of 2, and the one who received a talent was queried for making no profit, it means that God expects us to account for every blessing or grace he has invested in us. For instance, a married Christian man (with children) who has a natural gift of music and works as a teacher will be expected to account for all these blessings: how is he using his life to the glory of God? How is he developing his faith? How committed is he to his marital duties? How responsible is he for his children’s feeding, clothing, education, upbringing in the Lord, etc.? How much has he invested in developing his gift of music and how is he using it to serve God and society? How committed he is to his teaching duties?

Beloved, I hope this illustration makes it clear that there is so much that each of us has to account for. May those of us who are burying some of our talents, dig them up and begin to invest them; and may those who are already investing theirs, remain steadfast for their reward will be great! Amen!