LECTIO DIVINA

Living the Word

A WEEK'S JOURNEY WITH THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year A - 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time

A companion for encountering Jesus' love in everyday life.



Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13

You are invited to **read** the Gospel passage slowly, attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out. The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. "Sir," he said "you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness."

Next the man with the two talents came forward. "Sir," he said "you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness."

Last came forward the man who had the one talent. "Sir," he said "I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back."

But his master answered him, "You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have recovered my capital with interest.

So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the five talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.'"

Background to Gospel passage

Where does it happen?
On the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem.

Who is there?
Jesus speaks privately with His disciples.

When does it happen?
This forms part of Jesus' discourse on the end times, in which he is intent on impressing upon his disciples their responsibilities as his own passion and death draw near.

What happens?
The Parable of the Talents reminds Jesus' disciples of their responsibility to use their God-given gifts faithfully to build up His kingdom while awaiting His return. Those who act courageously are rewarded, while those who allow fear to paralyse them risk spiritual exile through their own inaction.

Recognising Stage (Meditate)

- *Trust in the power of the Holy Spirit* ***at work within you.***
- ***Enter into the passage:*** *Where do you feel drawn? What touches you? What does it*
- *remind you of?*
- *Let the Gospel and your memories speak* ***to each other.***
- ***Notice the same loving presence of*** *Jesus at work* ***again today*** *in yourself and in others.*
- *If needed, use the following prompts to awaken such memories*

"The man who received five talents promptly went off and traded with them and made five more."
Can you recall a time when you recognised your God-given gifts and used them generously in the service of others?

Can you recall a time when someone believed in you and entrusted you with responsibility? Remember how this inspired you to give of your best and the fruit it bore.
Or
The experience of the third servant – being afraid to take a risk.

Can you recall a time when fear of failure prevented you from using your gifts or taking an opportunity?
Or
Entrusting responsibility to others and witnessing their growth

Can you recall a time when you entrusted something important to another person and watched them grow in confidence, take responsibility and empower others?

What memories come back to you? Listen deeply to your own life experience.

Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?

(Some might find it helpful to journal their memory.)

I remember the time when…

Gen.25:16, 'Truly God was in this place and I didn't see it,' until now!

Prayer Response

You are invited to respond in your own words, and where possible, together with some words from the passage. *Let the prayer flow from your recognition of the passage, or any part of it, in life experience. You might find it helpful to journal your prayer.*

Tell your Father how this passage and the memories it has evoked have awakened gratitude for the presence of Jesus in your life and in the world. Heavenly Father, I thank you…

The Gospel is always a call to repentance as well. Share with the Father your sorrow for the times when you, or a community you belong to, have fallen short in living this Gospel. Heavenly Father, I am sorry for...

Ask your Father for the help you need to live the Gospel more fully—in yourself, your family, community, Church and world. Heavenly Father, please give us the help we need to…



You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God's presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to greater stillness and greater silence, e.g. "share in your Master's happiness."

An Invitation to Reflect

From your journey with the passage in meditation and prayer, what new insight or understanding have you received about the true meaning of love or some expression of it, into what it means to be fully human, and how God's kingdom is being made present among us today?

Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.

Thought for the week

Fear of failure can prevent us from discovering what we are capable of becoming.

Responsibility

With God's help I will try to live this gospel by...



Children

For Primary School Children

Reading: Jesus told a story about a master who trusted his servants with gifts while he was away. Some used what they were given wisely, while another did nothing, teaching us to make good use of the gifts God has given us.

Recognising: Can you think of a person—a teacher, a parent or a coach—who encourages you to use your talents and try your best?

Draw or write about some talent or gift that God has given you to share with others.



Responding: Father, I thank You for the special gifts and talents You have given me.

Father, I am sorry for the times when I have not made good use of these gifts.

Father, I ask for Your help to use my talents to help others and make You proud.

Resting: Remain silent for a few moments with the word 'gifts' in your heart.

Reflecting: God gives each of us special gifts to use for good.

Responsibility: **This week I will use one of my talents to...**