Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

Wisdom 6:12–16; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Matthew 25:1–13

Excerpts from Pope Francis - *Angelus* - 19 November 2023

by Father Charles Fillion

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Brothers & sisters, as we have heard in the Gospel, a master departs on a journey and entrusts his talents. This is not what about how athletic we are, or how good we are in any sports, contests, games, etc. The Gospel is speaking about the master's possessions, entrusting his "capital", to his servants. Talents were a **monetary** unit. He distributes them according to each one's abilities.

The question we might ask at this moment is what I do with what we have or have been given. On the master return, he asks for an account of what they had done. Two of them had doubled what they had received, and the master praises them. The third, out of fear, had buried his talent, his money and can only return it.

Looking at this parable, we can learn *two different ways* of approaching God. The first way is that of the one who buries the talent, the money he has received, who cannot see the riches God gave him: he trusts neither his master nor himself. In fact, he says to his master: "Master, I knew you to be a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed" (v. 24).

He is afraid of him. He does not see the esteem, he does not see the trust that the lord places in him, but only sees the actions of a master who demands more than he gives, of a judge. This is his image of God: he cannot believe in his goodness. He cannot believe in the Lord's goodness towards him. This is why he gets stuck and does not allow himself to be involved in the mission he has received.

Let us look at the second way, with the other two characters, who repay their master's trust by in turn trusting in him. These two invest everything they received, even though they do not know the outset if everything will go well. They study; they see the possibilities and prudently seek out the best. They accept the risk of putting themselves on the line. They trust, they study and they risk. So, we must have the courage to act freely, creatively, to generate new wealth.

Brothers and sisters, this is the crossroads we face with God: fear or trust. Either you are afraid before God, or you trust in the Lord. And we, like the characters of the parable — all of us — have received talents — all of us — far more precious than money. But much of how we invest them depends on our trust in the Lord, which frees our hearts and makes us active and creative in goodness. Do not forget this: trust frees, always; fear paralyses.

Do I believe that God is the Father and entrusts gifts to me because he trusts me?

And do I trust in him to the point of putting myself on the line, without being discouraged even when the outcome is neither certain nor to be taken for granted?

Am I able to say every day in prayer, “Lord, I trust in you, give me the strength to keep going; I trust in you, in the things you have given me: let me know how to carry them forward”?

Lastly, also as a Church: do we cultivate a climate of trust, of unity, of mutual esteem in our surroundings, one that helps us move forward together.

May this Eucharist help us to overcome fear — and to trust the Lord.