

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction. You will call upon me, and I will answer you, and I will lead back your captives from every place.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 127)

ANTIPHON: Happy are those who fear the Lord.

RESPONSE: **Happy are those who fear the Lord.**

LECTOR: O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways! By the labour of your hands you shall eat. You will be happy and prosper. **R.**

LECTOR: Your wife like a fruitful vine in the heart of your house; your children like shoots of the olive, around your table. **R.**

LECTOR: Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion in a happy Jerusalem all the days of your life. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Live in me and let me live in you, says the Lord; my branches bear much fruit. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) To be near God is my happiness, to place my hope in God the Lord.

(Or)

Amen, I say to you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you will receive, and it shall be given to you, says the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS Prov 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; Matthew 25:14-30

NEXT WEEK (Christ the King, Year A) Ezek 34:11-12, 15-17; Ps 22; 1 Cor 15:20-26, 28; Mt 25:31-46

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Don't be afraid to use your gifts



19 November 2023 33rd Sunday Year A

Different people have different abilities. A person gifted with imagination or creativity may not be good at administration or finance. Someone with a flair for 'do it yourself' around the house may not be musical. A cook who is 'at home' in the kitchen may be completely lost when it comes to anything mechanical. Someone with sporting prowess may find computers and electronics out of their league.

The rich man in today's parable was aware of his servants' abilities. Before departing on his journey, he entrusted his property to each servant in proportion to their ability. He only gave as much responsibility as each one could shoulder. The first two servants worked according to their ability, increasing what had been entrusted to them. But the third did not. He simply returned the one talent he had been given. Fear held him back from using his ability to work for the extra he was capable of gaining. "I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground."

Fear can paralyse. It causes us to withdraw; concentrating our attention on ourselves and our security. It freezes our readiness to take risks and to face the unknown. It tempts us to conserve and to obsess about certainties. Fear can strip us of confidence and prevent us from reaching our potential.

Jesus was aware of the power that fear wielded in people's lives. When he was

at the end of his public life and soon to be executed, Jesus wanted his followers to continue what he'd begun and to embrace his great commission, "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature." But Jesus knew that those who would come after him would encounter many problems. Their biggest problem would be their own fear. Yet Jesus was insistent, "Do not be afraid."

When Peter fell on his knees saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man," Jesus responded with compassion and understanding. "Do not be afraid, from now on you will fish for people." When fear threatened to hold Peter back, Jesus called him to let go and walk on with faith and trust. Talents are given to bear fruit, not to lie in the bank or be buried in the ground, safe and unused. It may seem prudent not to risk, but in the end God expects otherwise. "Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten". In other words, 'use it or lose it'.

All of us have been gifted by God. If fear causes us to hide our God-given talents, then those around us are deprived. Jesus wants us to live our lives to the full; free from fear and always ready to share our abilities and talents for the good of all.

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