

FIRST READING

Proverbs 31 v10ff

A perfect wife - who can find her? She is far beyond the price of pearls. Her husband's heart has confidence in her from her he will derive no little profit. Advantage and not hurt she brings him all the days of her life. She is always busy with wool and with flax, she does her work with eager hands. She sets her hand to the distaff her fingers grasp the spindle. She holds out her hand to the poor she opens her arms to the needy. Charm is deceitful and beauty empty, the woman who is wise is the one to praise. Give her a share in what her hands have worked for and let her works tell her praises at the city gates.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

O blessed are those who fear the Lord.

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.

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

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.

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5 1-6

You will not be expecting us to write anything to you, brothers, about "times and seasons" since you know very well that the Day of the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night. It is when people are saying, "How quiet and peaceful it is" that the worst suddenly happens, as suddenly as labour pains come on a pregnant woman: and there will be no way for anybody to evade it. But it is not as if you live in the dark, my brothers for that Day to overtake you like a thief. No, you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness. So we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else does, but stay wide awake and sober.

Alleluia, alleluia! Even if you have to die, says the Lord, keep faithful and I will give you the crown of life. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 25 14-30

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 had 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 to bring 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 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 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 could have recovered my capital with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has five talents. For 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."

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St Anthony of Padua

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Sunday Masses: 6.00 (Vigil - Saturday Evening) 9.30am, 5.00pm (Sunday Morning)
Weekday Mass: Mon-Wed, Fri: 9.15am. (Thurs 9.15am at Holy Family)
Confessions: on request

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Commendation or critique of exploitation? [1]

The cultural lens through which we read Scripture is completely foreign to the cultural lens in which Scripture was originally written or read.[2] We usually interpret the parable of the talents in today's gospel and that of a similar scenario in Luke's gospel (Lk 19), as an exhortation to develop our God-given gifts. Our heroes are the slaves who returned their talents with interest. We dismiss the unprofitable slave, but people of a peasant background recognize him as the hero of the parable. How can this be? [3] He unmasks the fact that the master's wealth is derived entirely from ruthless business practices, usury and the cynical view that the rich will only get richer while the poor become destitute. Unwilling to participate in this exploitation, this third slave took the money out of circulation, where it could no longer be used to dispossess another farmer and his family. The consequence of the third slave's non-cooperation is banishment to the "outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" We have presumed this to be "hell," and so perhaps it is—that is, the hell on earth experienced by those rejected by the dominant culture. [4]

Moreover, if we assume, as does the traditional interpretation, that the master is a figure for God, it is a severe portrait indeed. The man/nobleman in the parable is Archelaos, the son of Herod, who had gone on a 3 year furlough to Rome after becoming king. He expected his stewards to collect the same unfair taxes that he had. He wanted them to oppress the poor as he had, and then he would rake in the whole profit.[5] The master represents the god of this age, the one who teaches and models the morally reprehensible behaviour of stealing from the poor to make themselves rich. Jesus is teaching us that we can expect the same fate as the third slave when we try to live according to His new commandment. [2]

Church historians, as early as Eusebius (339 AD) have known of this interpretation of this parable and several commentators assert that it is understood more correctly as a cautionary tale about the world than as a parable about the kingdom of God. (In the original Greek the words "kingdom of heaven" do not appear in v.14—those words were inserted later.) [4] The third slave is the one who is prepared to accept the consequences of his convictions. Nowadays we would call it civil disobedience. We would say that he is responding to a deeper truth; and this deeper truth always leads us into conflict with the superficial truth. [5] We need the courage of the third slave to become God's compassionate presence in the midst of pain and marginality.

Adapted [1] (Justin Ukpong)
[2] Jeremy Myers [3] Carl Schafer OFM [4]Ched Myers & Eric DeBode [5] Richard Rohr

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

15th November 2020

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DIARY AND MASS INTENTIONS

for the week beginning Saturday 14th November 2020

Sat		For our parish	
Sun		Patrick Bolger In thanks for safe birth	<i>33rd Sunday of the Year</i> <i>World Day of the Poor</i>
Mon		Chris Burscough	
Tue		Mary & Gerard Ibison	
Wed 10.00	<i>St. Ant</i>	Funeral Mass: Frances Farrer	
Thur 12.15	<i>St. Ant</i>	Funeral Mass: Jim Bashall	
Fri 10.00	<i>St. Ant</i>	Funeral Mass: Patrick Bolger	
Sat		For our parish	<i>Feast: Presentation of Bl. Virgin Mary</i>
Sun		Julie Butler For our parish	<i>Christ the King (34th of the Year)</i> <i>Youth Services Collection</i>

BIDDING PRAYERS

For all the poor people of the world, that the rich may learn to share
For those facing starvation every day, that better-off Christians may not forget them
For the families struggling with poverty in our own Community, and for those who support them.

We pray for the Church, that we may learn to recognise and encourage the talents of those who are amongst us.

We pray for the leaders of the nations of the world, that as they respond to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic and the climate emergency, they may make full use of the gifts God has given them in the service of the common good and of peace among nations.

We pray for the sick and the housebound of our parish and for those who care for them, particularly: Bill Embery, Lawrence Dunnagan, Betty Murphy, John Myerscough, Alice Myerscough, Chris Goldsmith, Frank Stanton, Marie Gardner, Brendan Gardner, Joan Green, Carole Adnitt, Jo Counsell, Les Farrer.

Pray for those who have died recently: Joseph Dugdale, Anthony Thistlethwaite, John Gardner, Margaret Curry, Patrick Bolger, Jim Bashall, Frances Farrer;

... and for those whose anniversaries are around now: Julie Butler, Eva Cookson, Joseph Etherington. Stephen Slater, Lilly Morrison, Kathleen Cummins, Elizabeth Clune, Alfred Kenneth Craven, Sean Finn, Thomas McTigue, Keith Yates, Mary Balshaw, Sylvia Wilcock Taylor, Christopher Burscough, Francis Farr. May they rest in peace.

We remember in our prayers those who have been injured or lost their lives in conflict, especially those from our parish.

Lockdown. Sadly for the safety and protection of parishioners all public Services have again been suspended. St. Anthony's church will be open for private prayer (with Exposition) as follows:

Mon & Wed: 10am-11am; Fri 5pm-6pm; Sat & Sun: 11am-12noon.

We are grateful to those who volunteer as Stewards for making this possible.

- Fr. Peter and Fr. John will offer Mass every morning but this has to be in private.
- There will a Newsletter every weekend as usual. Copies will be in church and on the notice board but if you would like one by e-mail send your e-mail address to parish.priest2@btinternet.com
- our parish volunteers continue to do a great job keeping in touch with housebound and lockdown parishioners. Let's continue to look out for one another, especially for those who are isolated or have particular needs. If you need help, or know someone who does, please contact us -there are many parishioners who are willing to help out. Don't be stuck and don't suffer in silence. Please ring: 724576 and leave your number.
- Funerals are restricted to 30 people, Baptisms to 6 people. Weddings are suspended.

World Day of the Poor Pope Francis designated the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary time as the "World Day of the Poor." The theme this year is "Stretch forth your hand to the poor", taken from the book of Sirach. Drawing from this text, Pope Francis observes that "its author presents his advice concerning many concrete situations in life, one of which is poverty. He insists that even amid hardship we must continue to trust in God." Further, "prayer to God and solidarity with the poor and suffering are inseparable."

Acknowledgements Thanks to those who are leaving Offertory envelopes in church during the Exposition. Thanks also for the regular envelopes containing donations to the Food Bank and to Cafod.

Today's Virtual 'Coffee Morning' Same log in details: on Zoom at 11.00am. Log in: Meeting ID: 819 8015 2432 Passcode: 879577

Masses received this week: Mary & Gerard Ibison.

Mass At Christmas We are still hopeful of celebrating Mass at Christmas as planned but we will obviously have to take things as they come.

Advent is only a couple of weeks away. We are hoping to provide a series of reflections for every day, available both online and printed. If you'd like to take part please let Fr. Peter or Fr. John know.

CAFOD is hosting an afternoon of reflection in preparation for the season of Advent. "Rebuilding Our Common Home in the light of Coronavirus:". It is on zoom on Thursday 19th November from 13.00-16.30. You need to register at <https://rebuildingourcommonhome.eventbrite.co.uk>