

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF OT-A

On this second to the last Sunday of the liturgical year we are given another parable about the return of Jesus and the Last Judgement.

Jesus is the man going on a journey and his disciples - including you and I - are the ones to whom he has entrusted his possessions.

"Talent" was a Greek word denoting a measure of money during Jesus' time, and in Medieval Latin the word referred to a weight or measure.

From this comes our English word "talent" which means an aptitude or special ability.

In today's parable the talents represent the divine gifts and treasure that God has given to those who believe in his Son.

The judgement of the servants is based on how well each used what was entrusted to them.

The same will be true for us: Good stewardship will be rewarded; laziness will be punished.

As St. Paul says, "We are children of the light ... and of the day ... let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay sober and alert."

One commentator put it this way: The followers of Jesus must not, metaphorically, "snooze their lives away."

The first reading from the Book of Proverbs give the marvelous example of "the worthy wife" or, in another translation, "the valiant woman."

She stays busy taking care, not only of her family, but also reaching out to the poor.

The version we read is edited for length, and the verses omitted also portray her as a keen business woman and gifted teacher.

"Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting" we are told, but "the woman who fears (reveres) the Lord is to be praised."

It is one of those interesting "coincidences" that we have this reading the weekend following the election of the first woman Vice-President.

Of course, women have always been the often unseen backbone of society and of the Church.

We also have the "coincidence" that last week we celebrated the example of St. Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, the first American citizen to be canonized.

This week we will celebrate Saints Margaret of Scotland, Gertrude the Great, Elizabeth of Hungary, and Rose Duchesne, who was a missionary to Native Americans west of the Mississippi.

We conclude this week celebrating the woman of faith par excellence: the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Saturday is the Feast of the Presentation of Mary, the day she was dedicated as an infant to the service of the Lord.

Mary placed her whole life at the service of God's plan for the world's salvation.

All these holy women diligently used the "talents" entrusted to them, "working with loving hands" for building up the Kingdom of God.

And God has declared to each of them: "Well done good and faithful servants. Enter your Master's joy!"

What about us? What will the Lord say to us?

How will our Divine Master judge our stewardship of the gifts that have been entrusted to us?

Let's you and I not "snooze" our lives away as we await our Master's return.