Homily for the XXXIII Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

Proverbs 31:10–13, 19–20, 30–31; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6; Matthew 25:14–30

As we approach the end of the Church's liturgical year, today's readings invite us to reflect on the end of our earthly lives and how we are preparing ourselves to enter the joy of Heaven. The central message is that we must make the best use of the gifts and talents God has entrusted to us, so that one day we may hear those beautiful words of Jesus: *"Well done, my good and faithful servant! Come and share your master's happiness"* (Matthew 25:21).

The first reading presents us with the example of a hardworking and faithful woman who uses her abilities with wisdom and generosity. The Responsorial Psalm reminds us that true happiness comes from living in the fear of the Lord. St Paul, in the second reading, encourages us to remain awake and sober, and to build one another up as we wait for the Day of the Lord. Here, the fear of the Lord does not mean being afraid of a harsh master. It means the loving respect of a child for a loving father, wanting to do what pleases Him. It is not fear that paralyses us, but love that inspires us to live faithfully.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us the parable of the talents. A master entrusts different amounts of money to three servants before going on a journey. Two servants use their talents wisely and increase what they have received. The third, out of fear, buries his talent in the ground. When the master returns, he praises the first two but rebukes the third. The message is simple: God does not expect everyone to achieve the same things, but He expects each of us to make good use of what we have received.

Everything we have is a gift from God: our abilities, time, knowledge, experience and faith. We are not all equally gifted, but nobody can say that they have nothing to offer. Some are good at organising, others at welcoming people, visiting the sick, singing, teaching children, cooking or helping with practical work. Even those who are unable to do much physically can offer their prayers, wisdom and encouragement. A kind word, a visit to someone who is lonely or a helping hand to a neighbour may seem small, but nothing done with love is insignificant in God's eyes.

The third servant reminds us that sometimes we bury our talents through fear, lack of confidence or unwillingness to take responsibility. We may say, "I am too old", "I am not good enough" or "Let somebody else do it." Of course, age and illness can limit what we are able to do, but there is always something we can offer.

We see this clearly in our own parish communities. So much of our parish life depends on the generosity of volunteers who give their time faithfully, week after week. We are grateful for everyone who helps with our churches, liturgies, pastoral care and various activities. At the same time, we need more people to come forward and share their gifts. The Church is not the responsibility of the priest alone; it belongs to all of

us. We are not just people who come to church; we are the Church. Each of us has a part to play in building up our parish community.

There is one particular talent that every Christian has received: the gift of faith. Our responsibility is not simply to preserve it or keep it to ourselves. We must live it, practise it and share it with others. Faith should influence the way we speak, forgive, treat people and care for those in need. When we welcome a newcomer, visit someone who is sick or housebound, support a family in difficulty or reach out to someone who feels forgotten, we are putting our faith into action. We may not be able to do great things, but we can all do small things with great love.

As we come towards the end of another liturgical year, let us ask ourselves: What have I done with the gifts God has entrusted to me? Have I used them generously, or have I buried them through fear, indifference or lack of commitment? One day, the Lord will not ask why we were not as talented as someone else. He will ask how faithfully we used what He gave us.

Let us therefore not bury our talents. Let us use whatever gifts we have to serve God and one another. May our parish communities become places where people can experience the love of Christ through us. And may we all be faithful servants who, at the end of our earthly journey, hear the Lord say: *"Well done, my good and faithful servant! Come and share your master's happiness."* Amen.