

Thirty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time A/2017

The readings of this Sunday talk about our commitment to God and its consequence for our eternal salvation. They show that eternal life is a prize that God gives us when we fulfill correctly our commitment before him. They invite us to take seriously our commitments because our eternal salvation depends on them.

The first reading draws a portrait of a good wife. It shows how she fulfills the duties of her household with dexterity. It equally shows how her goodness and fear of the Lord bring her more praise than the beauty of her body.

What is behind this text is the idea that the qualities of the heart are more important than the beauty of the body. There is also the idea that the service to the poor and needy is appreciable to God.

This text allows understanding the point of today's Gospel as Jesus talks about the parable of possessions left to the servants. First of all, the Gospel starts with Jesus talking about a man who was about to go on a trip and gave his possessions to his servants so that they make it productive. It also shows how the first and the second who received, one five talents and the other two, fructified them while the one who received one did not do anything with it.

After that, the Gospel shows how, at the return of the Master and the asking of the account, the first servants were rewarded while the last was punished for his lack of entrepreneurial spirit. The Gospel ends up with a warning showing that to the one who has, more will be given and the one who does not have, even the small he has will be taken away.

What do we learn from today's Gospel? Today I want to talk about God's generosity and its demand. As a matter of fact, we are all different from one another, each according to his skills and talents.

However, in spite of our differences we are equal because we are all gifted by God in the same way so that each one of us has always something to offer to others. If someone is talented as a musician, another is gifted as reconciliatory of his brothers and sisters. If one is good in cooking, another is excellent in teaching, etc. Nobody lacks anything.

In other words, the gifts are given to one according to his abilities and skills. If that is true, then, there is no reason for being jealous because one has received more than the other. In truth, what counts is not how many talents we have, but how well we use what we have.

That is exactly the point of the parable makes. In fact, one would say that the one who received one talent despised his gift to the point that he went on burying it in the ground instead of working with it in order to produce more. That is why he got into trouble. In other words, whatever the gift we have, we should never minimize it. It is always worthwhile because God who has given it to us knows the reason why he did so and, on our part, we should be thankful to God and put it to good use.

In that perspective, God does not demand of us what we do not have or did not give us. On the contrary, he wants us to use to the full the abilities we do possess and has given us. That is why this parable raises the question of evaluation and assessment of the gifts received. We really need to assess what we do with the gifts that God has given us. For instance, when I look at our choir, I see only a few people who are dedicated to sing and

praise God. And yet, when we are at the Mass, I hear a lot of beautiful voices coming from the pews. Why cannot you join the choir? If only some of those people could join the choir, how wonderful that could be that together we praise the Lord!

It is time that we ask a question about what we do with what God has given us. That is why the Gospel ends up with a warning: “The one who has more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away”. This is not God’s injustice, but rather fairness because if you are incapable of taking care of the least you have, how could you take care of more if it were given to you. It is like someone who plays the piano. If he does not practice, he will lose everything, but if he regularly practices, he will become good at it.

I know that some people are afraid of showing the talents they have. But why? There is no reason in doing so? Look at what happened to the servant who received one talent. He was afraid of losing it and he did not do anything. Because of that, he was punished and his talent taken away. Therefore, we have to understand that if we remain fearful, we cannot do anything. We have to take the risk of working with the gifts God has given us for the glory of his name and wellbeing of our brothers and sisters. It is only by taking the risk that we can do more. As a French proverb says, “Qui ne risque rien n’a rien”, that is, The one who does not risk anything will have nothing.

That is the reason why I am convinced that any blessing is demanding. When God gifts us more than ordinary people, he will also be demanding of us. That appears clearly in the case of the two servants to whom were given more talents. Once they produced double of what they had received, their master gave them more, because they showed their abilities to work and produce more.

Let me finish by saying that progress comes out of practice. When Jesus says that “everyone who has more will be given, and one who has not, even what he has will be taken away”, he wants to invite us to the practice of our talents and gifts. That is true because if we have a talent and we exercise it, we will certainly develop and grow. On the contrary, if we have a talent and we do not exercise it, it will fade and we will end up losing it.

Let us pray, then, and ask the Lord to give us the courage to develop the talents and gifts he has given us. Let us ask him to make us aware of his return so that when he comes back he finds us working with our talents for the glory of his name and the good of our brothers and sisters. May God bless you all!

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thessal. 5:1-6; Matthew 25:14-30

Homily Date: November 19, 2017

© 2017 – Fr Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD

Contact: www.mbala.org

Document Name: 20171119homily.pdf