Homily of Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, 2026

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; Psalm 128:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; Matthew 25:14-31

The first reading is a parable that speaks of our relationship with God. The husband represents God. The worthy wife represents us. The parable encourages us to embrace our duties and responsibilities with diligence and with fear of the Lord.

The hardworking, caring, and God-fearing wife reminds us of all the hardworking, caring, and God-fearing women who sustain families, communities, parishes, institutions, countries, and the world. They deserve our prayers, love, recognition, respect, fairness, protection, appreciation, gratitude, and praise. Someone says, "The man who says it can't be done should not interrupt the woman doing it." The reading says, "Give her a reward for her labors" (Proverbs 31:31).

We pray for all the women who are going through all kinds of abuse and violence and those who live in difficult conditions.

The second reading is St. Paul's admonition to the Thessalonians who presumed, wrongly, that the day of the Lord was very near and therefore refused to do any work. They went 'to sleep.' The reading encourages us 'not to go to sleep' but to be hardworking like the worthy wife in the first reading. We pray for the conversion of the 'people of the night' and 'people of darkness' who cause agony to others by robbing them of their hard-earned resources, and those who deprive others of their rights and privileges. We pray that young people may appreciate the value of hard work.

In the gospel, the servants who worked hard and made profit were called good and faithful servants and were rewarded with great responsibilities. As for the servant who effectively 'went to sleep' by digging a hole and burying his master's money, his talent was taken away and he was severely punished. Jesus says, "To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (Matthew 25:29). Unused talent fades away; which is to say, if you don't use it, you lose it.

Again, in the parable, the master is God. We are the servants. There is always a time of reckoning; a time we are required to account for our actions and our talents. We give accounts on two levels: While still alive, accountability is required for our duties and responsibilities. In the afterlife, there is judgment and reward. We know situations when people refuse to give an account of their responsibilities. Some give falsified account.

There are some important questions for us to reflect on: What are we doing with the talents, gifts, positions, duties, responsibilities, opportunities, and blessings that God has entrusted to us? Are we like the hardworking, worthy wife and the good and faithful servants, or are we like the lazy servant and those who fall asleep?

The wicked and lazy servant "went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money." When asked to give an account, he lashed out with a furious insult. We see this happen so often around us, where someone fights the very people to whom they are supposed to render an account.

I suspect that the wicked and lazy servant was also angry at receiving only one talent and envious of those who received more. I suspect too that the master knew that the servant was lazy which was why he gave him only one talent to test his ability. The gospel states that master gave the talents according to the servants' ability. The servant failed the test and went from being lazy to being wicked. Jesus says, "The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones" (Luke 16:10).

It is striking what the master said to the good and faithful servants, "Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities." This is an invitation to us to be faithful in small matters. Many great people rose from humble beginnings. Many big establishments began in a small way. Jesus says, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move" (Matthew 17:20). Jesus began his ministry with only twelve apostles (Luke 6:12). He fed the multitude with five loaves and two fish (Mark 6:41). A small seed germinates and grows into a huge tree. Every animal, even the mightiest ones, begins as a tiny fetus. Therefore, no one should say, "I can't start. It is too small." To take such a stance is like accepting defeat even before a contest begins.

Chinese philosopher, Laozi, says, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." St. (Mother) Theresa, "Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies." And Robert Baden-Powell, "The most successful detectives owe their success to noticing small things."

O Lord, grant me a hardworking and accountable spirit. Increase my little light, and may my talents grow. Amen.

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