



33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)



Matthew 25: 14-30

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

“The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

“After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

“And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; enter into the joy of your master.’

“Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’

“But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”



Reflection:

The slave who buried the one talent knew something was expected of him. Even so, he didn’t do it. This may often be the case with us, too. God’s gift of love, faith and spiritual gifts call for our response. We are asked to develop, use and multiply the many spiritual gifts that we are given. Only then will we share in the joy that God takes in us



Table Discussion: (at mealtime)

“What spiritual gifts has God given to you? How do you think you can best use them?”



Parenting Corner:

In addition to academic, athletic, social or artistic gifts, your child(ren) is (are) blessed with spiritual gifts. These may include a sensitivity towards others, a love for God, His people and His creation, peace, gentleness, patience, faith, wisdom, ability to understand others, determination etc. In order to develop these gifts, it is important to help your child(ren) identify their gifts and be open to receiving greater gifts from God.

Many children may find it difficult to see their own spiritual gifts. It is often easier to see the spiritual gifts in others. If this is the case, you may want to begin with talking about a family member that they admire and the reason for their admiration. You might also want to turn the conversation to what you admire in your child.

Giving your child(ren) the opportunity to talk and reflect on the wide array of their giftedness, that goes beyond the academic, athletic or artistic accomplishments, helps your child(ren) in seeing their overall worth as a person that far surpasses that we can do or excel at.



Spiritual Gifts Activity (bedtime activity):

Place the following ten spiritual gifts in a basket (add or delete as you see fit):

1. Good listener/attentive.
2. Caring towards others/creation.
3. Love of God.
4. Person of peace.
5. Wisdom.
6. Determination/Keeps on trying.
7. Patience.
8. Faith/hope.
9. Joyfulness.
10. Open to learn.

- Have your child pick one piece of paper out of the box (each night).
- Talk about the gift by focusing on someone they know who exemplifies the gift.
- Talk about the gift by focusing on themselves.

With certain gifts, you may want to point out how you see it evident in their lives. With other gifts, those who are valued by your child (but not necessarily present), you may want to encourage your child to pray for them and/or talk about one or two things they can do to become more gifted in that area.

Prayer:

Lord God, I thank you for my many things I can do, but most of all for the spiritual gifts that help me to be the person that I am. Please help me to be aware of the gifts you have given me and be open to the ones I need most. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



St. Bernadette Soubirous, a Rather Ordinary Girl:

Bernadette was a rather ordinary girl and, if she had it her way, she would have wanted to stay that way. Born in Lourdes, with parents who struggled to make enough money to feed their six children, her family was finally forced to move into a one room basement apartment that was nicknamed the dungeon.

Despite severe poverty and the difficult conditions under which she grew up, Bernadette was filled with joy. And, though her struggle with sickness prevented her from going to school on a regular basis, affecting her ability to read and write, her love for God and desire to serve Him was never in doubt.

Bernadette's ordinary life was changed when, at the age 14, on a cold February day, she was out playing and gathering firewood with her sister and a friend. When the other two decided to cross a nearby stream, Bernadette stayed behind in fear of getting her feet wet and getting sick. While she was waiting for her sister and friend to return to where they left her, Bernadette heard the rustling sound of bushes moving, as if disturbed by a mighty wind. Disturbed by the sound, since the wind was not blowing where she stood, Bernadette looked up to see what was happening. When she did, Bernadette saw a young woman with a white dress, a blue sash and yellow roses at her feet. In her hand, the woman held a rosary, which Bernadette slowly began to pray.

When the other two returned, they found Bernadette in a state of prayer. Wondering what had happened, Bernadette began to tell them what she had seen.

Every week, around the same time, Bernadette felt drawn to visit the grotto where she had first seen the vision. And, each time, for a period of five months, with only two exceptions, the young woman appeared. When Bernadette asked her who she was, the young woman smiled at her and said, "I am the Immaculate Conception", a term commonly used for Mary.

Because she had told the two others, news began to spread throughout the surrounding region. Her parents, fearing for the safety of Bernadette, tried to put an end to her weekly trips to the grotto. Each time she went, more and more people followed.

During her visits with Bernadette, the young woman rarely spoke. When and if she did, the young woman spoke of a greater need for prayer, especially the praying of the rosary, and the need for people to turn their attention back to God.

Many people believed that Mary had appeared to Bernadette; others did not. As for Bernadette, she didn't care what other people thought. She would spend the rest of her life offering her life to God. She was more than happy not to be noticed.

The grotto became a place for people to go and ask for Mary's prayers. At first, they built a pool where people could bathe and be healed. When miracles began to happen, and people were actually being healed of their illnesses, they built a beautiful church. Millions of people still go to Lourdes each year to seek God and to be healed of their diseases.

Bernadette rarely spoke of what had happened to her during those five months of her life and she hid away from all the attention she was given. "The Virgin (Mary) used me as a broom to remove the dust (from people's spiritual lives)," she once said. "When the work is done, the broom is put behind the door again."



How to Pray the Rosary:

Most young children do not have the attention span to pray the Rosary in its entirety. Start them slow and in manageable bits, let them hold a rosary and look at how it is divided. Children may also enjoy making their own rosary with beads and string, tying knots between each section.

The 4 basic prayers: -

- The Creed (represented by the cross) Said once, at the very beginning.
- The Our Father (represented by the first bead and after each succession of 10 Hail Marys).
- The Hail Mary (represented by the three beads and each section of ten beads).
- The Glory Be (Said after the first three 3 Hail Marys and every successive 10 Hail Marys).

The Four sets of Mysteries:

The Joyful Mysteries:

1. The Annunciation (Angel Gabriel's Visit to Mary).
2. The Visitation (Mary's Visit to Elizabeth).
3. The Birth of Jesus.
4. The Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple.
5. The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

The Luminous Mysteries:

1. The Baptism of Jesus.
2. The Wedding at Cana.
3. The Proclamation of the Good News and the Call to Conversion.
4. The Transfiguration.

5. The Institution of the Eucharist.

The Sorrowful Mysteries:

1. The Agony in the Garden.
2. The Scourging at the Pillar.
3. The Crowning with Thorns.
4. Jesus is Condemned to Death.
5. The Crucifixion.

The Glorious Mysteries:

1. The Resurrection.
2. The Ascension.
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit.
4. The Assumption of Mary.
5. The Coronation of Mary.

Choose one set of mysteries, each time you pray the Rosary, and announce the mystery you will be thinking of prior to beginning the Our Father at the outset of each section of ten beads. Note: the prayers are meant to be a type of mantra while you reflect on the various aspects of Jesus' life. You might also like to draw each of these mysteries as a visual point of focus.