

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 15:4a, 5b

R<sup>1</sup>. Alleluia, alleluia.

Remain in me as I remain in you, says the Lord.  
Whoever remains in me bears much fruit.

R<sup>2</sup>. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel** Matt 25:14-30; L157A

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

“A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.

To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one—to each according to his ability.

Then he went away.

Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five.

Likewise, the one who received two made another two.

But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money.

“After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them.

The one who had received five talents came forward

bringing the additional five.

He said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.’

His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant.

Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities.

Come, share your master’s joy.’

Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said,

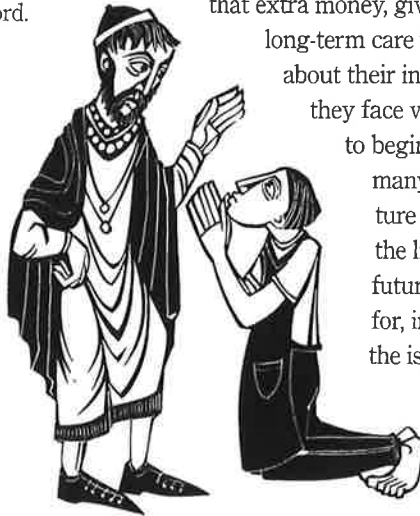
‘Master, you gave me two talents.

See, I have made two more.’

His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant.

Reflecting on the Gospel

There is much talk these days about baby boomers moving into retirement age and the challenge that the number of retirees drawing social security will place on this government trust fund. Studies suggest to us that this fund will be completely depleted within a couple of decades. Workers are encouraged to put money aside in other accounts to supplement their retirement income. And even that extra money, given a prolonged illness requiring skilled medical care in a long-term care facility, would probably run out. Many older people worry about their investments and whether they will have enough when they face various end-of-life issues. Younger people are encouraged to begin planning early in life and certainly to begin saving. In many ways our future is already upon us. We invest in our future and pray that everything will be OK. Nearing the end of the liturgical year, the gospels draw our attention to another future: life after death. As with retirement, we must prepare for, invest in this future. This Sunday’s gospel parable raises the issue of investments and benefits and directs us to think of how we await that future.



The master gave to the three servants in the gospel “each according to his ability.” We have not all been given the same sum of talents, but Jesus, our Master, has invested in every one of us. We are not judged

according to the amount given us, but we are judged by

the choices we make to use to the fullest potential what Jesus has invested in us. The most important choice we make in life is fidelity to whatever we are called to do—even in what seems to be small matters. The continuation of Jesus’ saving work depends upon this fidelity. If we are faithful, Jesus will judge us worthy beneficiaries of the greatest return on any investment: a share in the riches of the “master’s joy”—eternal Life.

We are now living in the delay before our Master’s return. This parable teaches what to do during this time of waiting—it is not empty time, for sure. We are to live in such a way that we grow in our greatest “possession”—the divine Life that has been given us. If, like the lazy servant in the parable, we focus on our fear and Christ’s judgment, we will be paralyzed in our ability to continue using the “investments” we have been given to continue Christ’s work of salvation. However, if we focus on the promised share in the “master’s joy,” then we will be willing to risk what we have in order to grow in our most prized possession—our share in divine Life and the relationship with Christ that entails. The Christian life and journey of discipleship begins with our being given an unmerited share in God’s Life. When we are faithful it will end wondrously—we will enter fully into the “master’s joy.” If we are not faithful . . .

Living the Paschal Mystery

The master commends the two faithful servants for their industriousness and then tells them he will give them “great responsibilities.” For us Christians our “great responsibilities” are, of course, to be faithful disciples making present the kingdom of God in our daily lives. Another part of these “great responsibilities” is to live now the Master’s joy, confident that one day we will enter even more fully into that joy. Responsibility means to use our Master’s “investments” in us to spread God’s goodness as well as appreciate now the joy of all that has been given us. Joy isn’t something only in the future; it is a fruit of the Spirit we enjoy now.

*Continued in Appendix A, p. 300, or  
Matt 25:14-15, 19-21 in Appendix A, p. 300.*

**Focusing the Gospel**

**Key words and phrases:** entrusted his possessions to them, each according to his ability, faithful in small matters, share your master’s joy, he will grow rich, useless servant

**To the point:** The master gave to the three servants in the gospel “each according to his ability.” Jesus, our Master, has invested in every one of us. We are judged by the choices we make to use to the fullest potential what Jesus has invested in us. The most important choice we make in life is fidelity to whatever we are called to do—even in what seems to be small matters. The continuation of Jesus’ saving work depends upon this fidelity. If we are faithful, Jesus will judge us worthy beneficiaries of the greatest return on any investment: a share in the riches of the “master’s joy”—eternal Life. If we are not faithful . . .

**Connecting the Gospel**

**to the first reading:** The faithful wife in the first reading uses her talents to serve both family and neighbor because she is moved to do so by the tender love of her husband who has entrusted his greatest treasure to her—his heart. We are moved to serve both God and others by the greatest treasure given to us—the love of God prompting us to fidelity and leading us to eternal Life.

**to experience:** How proud children feel when parents invest them with some small responsibility! How astounding it is that Jesus invests us with the major responsibility of continuing his saving work!

**Connecting the Responsorial Psalm**

**to the readings:** The first reading and psalm together offer us a balanced image of a woman and a man who, each in their respective social roles, are faithful to God’s desires about the manner of human living. Both texts are couched in the domestic terms which characterized Hebrew life and understanding, but the Lectionary’s intent is to offer models for all sorts of lifestyles, vocations, and situations in life. Those who “fear the Lord” are faithful in carrying out the ordinary everyday demands of covenant living and their fidelity and generosity flow back to them in abundant blessings.

In the gospel parable Jesus places the same demand on us and makes the same promise. He has invested in each of us some responsibility for building up the kingdom of God. If we are faithful to what has been invested in us, we will be greatly rewarded by Jesus when he returns in glory. If we are unfaithful, however, we will have everything, even the kingdom of heaven, taken from us. May we choose the path of fidelity which leads to blessedness and to a share in God’s joy.

**to psalmist preparation:** The “talent” Jesus has given you is more than just a good voice, a musical ear, a sense of rhythm. He has also graced you with the ability to lead the Body of Christ in sung liturgical prayer. Pray this week for the grace to use faithfully this talent Jesus has invested in you. You, and the assembly, will both be blessed!

**ASSEMBLY & FAITH-SHARING GROUPS**

- Jesus, the Master, has entrusted to me these “possessions” . . . I use them to . . .
- I find it easy to be faithful even “in small matters” when . . . I find it difficult to be faithful when . . .
- I experience now the “master’s joy” when I . . .

**PRESIDERS**

One of the “possessions” God has entrusted to me is the assembly and so I . . .

**DEACONS**

My serving ministry continues Jesus’ saving ministry by . . . The joy I receive is . . .

**HOSPITALITY MINISTERS**

Even the smallest gesture of genuine hospitality yields a large dividend of the “master’s joy” because . . .

**MUSIC MINISTERS**

The “master’s joy” I receive when I invest myself faithfully in my music ministry is . . .

**ALTAR MINISTERS**

My God-given “possessions” that are increased by serving others are . . .

**LECTORS**

As a lector, God’s word is my most important “possession” and so I . . .

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Celebrating the Eucharist is already a share in the fullness of the “master’s joy” in that . . .

or Matt 25:14-15, 19-21

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 called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.  
 To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one—  
 to each according to his ability.  
 Then he went away.

After a long time  
 the master of those servants came back  
 and settled accounts with them.  
 The one who had received five talents came forward  
 bringing the additional five.  
 He said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents.  
 See, I have made five more.’  
 His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant.  
 Since you were faithful in small matters,  
 I will give you great responsibilities.  
 Come, share your master’s joy.’”