

Homily for 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

By Dom David Tomlins OCSO

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Today's parable (Mt. 25:14-30) put me in mind of a prayer which is used here regularly in our Office of None on Thursday afternoons. There we pray:

Teach us, Lord our God,
to use time well;
and grant that we may always esteem our earthly life,
with all its toils and joys;
for this is the humble way that you chose
to lead us to the glory
where you live forever and ever.

"Teach us to use time well". This, surely, is an important prayer. It is not just a prayer for efficiency, for a fruitful time and motion outcome to our days. Rather, it is what the parable is calling us to do: to use time well **to develop what has been entrusted to us by God**. Each of us has been gifted by God with the resources to become the person we are intended to be in the divine plan, with the capacity to cooperate in shaping the world day by day a little bit closer to God's intention and will.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them... Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them". The time we are to use well is the time between God's gracious entrustment of his "property" to us and his return to review how we have responded to the trust we have been shown.

This parable added the word "talent" to our common vocabulary. In the story itself the talent was a coin. In modern day speech it is a special aptitude, quality or gift. Each of us is talented in some way; we have different talents. And we have a responsibility before God and each other to employ our particular talents for our own betterment and for that of the world and our brothers and sisters.

However, in reflecting on this parable let us not become too fixated on our individual gifts or talents, and fail to take note of those truly astounding ones we hold in common. These are numerous. I would suggest that **fundamental** to them all is **God's revelation of his immense love for every single human being**. Divine love was revealed in our creation, the gift of our human life. It was revealed in the Father's giving of his Son to the world, and in the Son's saving death for each one of us. It is revealed in our identity as sons and daughters of God. God's love accompanies us in every moment of life's journey. How we should treasure this Good News of the revelation of God's love! This revelation has been "entrusted" to us, not to be buried but to be taken into the depths of our hearts and consciousness to become a transforming power.

We "use time well" when we welcome this revelation of God's love daily in the many ways it comes to us, most particularly **in the scriptures**, but also **in the daily events, encounters and relationships** that constitute our lives. As the prayer I quoted also said:

Grant that we may always esteem our earthly life,
with all its toils and joys;
for this is the humble way that you chose
to lead us to the glory
where you live for ever and ever.

God reveals his love for us in "our earthly life with all its toils and joys". It is there, in the daily, the ordinary, that he entrusts us with what we must use in such a way as to hear from him when he comes to ask an accounting from us,

well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness.

To **believe** in God's infinite love for us revealed by the Father in his Son's mission to the world; to **hope** in the great happiness which that love holds out to us at life's end; to live a response of **love** for God and for our brothers and sisters: this is to be **faithful servants who use time well** while awaiting our master's return. In baptism God's love takes hold of us and brings about a union which is far beyond our power to understand. Baptism also entrusts us with those theological powers of faith, hope and love which enable us to live here and now the life which will finally be ours in its fullness when we enter into our "master's happiness". Let us be good stewards of God's gifts to us.