



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



14 / 15 NOVEMBER 2020
33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
World Day of the Poor + Collection for the Holy Places

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

True Humility and Talents

Some people think that humility is a matter of taking yourself to be small, unworthy, not up for much. But, in the Gospel parable, the servant who thinks he is too little to do much with his talent is dismissed as wicked and useless, and his talent is taken away from him. The Lord doesn't praise him for humility.

So, what is humility? It is the opposite of pride—but what is pride? Pride isn't denying that there is some excellence, some talent, in yourself when there really is. Rather, pride is a failure to recognize that that talent is given you by the Lord.

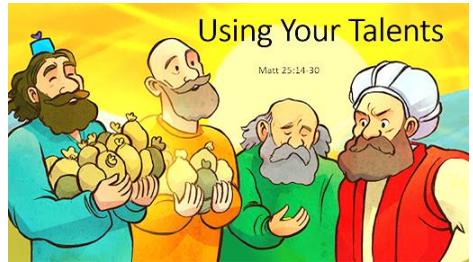
Of course, we are small and unworthy. What else would we be? Our talents are not a function of what we are and can do. Every excellence in us is a gift of the Lord's. We can acknowledge the excellence that is truly in us without danger of pride, provided we remember that such excellence comes from the Lord.

Not only that, but in the Gospel Reading our Lord announces a funny distribution principle: to him who has, more will be given. So here is the idea. A person who does not refuse a gift of the Lord's receives it and consequently has more. Then, because he has more, the Lord will offer him another gift. If he does not refuse that new gift, it will be given—and so he will have more. And then more will be given to him. And so on and on, till a person blazes in glory for the Lord.

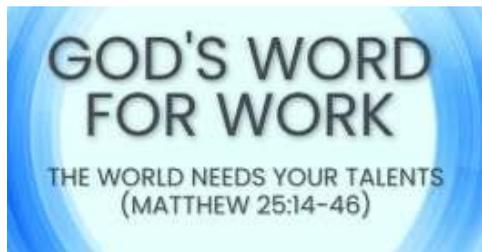
Unlike the useless servant in the parable, then, we can aim as high as we like, with true humility, provided we recognize as gift every excellence we have. Everything is gift, and everything is meant to be given back in service of love for the Lord.

The parable in today's gospel reading is so well known, that the word, 'talent', has become part of our language. The original story of Jesus, however, had a far more serious message than the development of natural gifts. The 'talent' Jesus refers to was an enormous quantity of precious metal (26 kgs of gold or silver). The immensity of the wealth entrusted to the servants was far beyond the experience of Jesus' hearers. The parable challenges them to recognise that God's immense blessings bring great responsibilities.

The sharp edge of the parable, as Matthew reports it, seems to indicate a background of controversy. It may well be that the original parable of Jesus was a challenge to the Sadducees – the conservative Temple establishment who were not open to wholesome developments that had taken place in the biblical tradition, and were opposed, therefore, ↗ ↘



☞☞ to the mission of Jesus. Scholars find grounds for this in the wording of the parable. The master ‘hands over’ the talents; this term was associated in old Israel with the passing on of the traditions of God’s people. The term ‘gained’ – applied to the profits made by the servants – was associated with the winning of converts. In their self-centred conservatism, the Sadducees had no concern to carry forward Israel’s mission to be ‘a light to the nations’. As the parable was recalled in Matthew’s community, however, it may have been directed against the dangers of complacency in that community – that settled for the minimum requirements of life as the Lord’s disciples, and was not ready to set out upon the great adventure of putting into practice the program of the Sermon on the Mount. The conclusion, ‘To anyone who has will be given more; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away’ – a saying of Jesus that appears several times in the gospels – was probably added by Matthew, to drive home the point of the parable. Its meaning for Jesus was that one who is spiritually open will enjoy God’s on-going blessings; whereas one who is closed will miss the opportunities offered them. Matthew emphasises the seriousness of the parable’s lesson by concluding his narrative – as he does in other places – with reference to the ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’ in store for those who have no place in the Kingdom.



The parable of Jesus points to the ‘Day of the Lord’ when God’s people will be called to account for the responsibilities brought by the great blessings they have received. In today’s reading from Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians, Paul continues his instruction concerning the Lord’s return, echoing the imagery used by Jesus in the gospels. Life must go on; it is not given to us to know the ‘times and seasons’ of the final reckoning; the ‘Day of the Lord’ will come ‘like a thief in the night’; God’s people must ‘stay awake and sober’, living as ‘children of the light’. It is not difficult to see that these themes provide the background of today’s parable. The master is a long time in coming, and arrives unexpectedly to ‘go through the servants’ accounts’. The servants who have administered well the wealth entrusted to them are to be entrusted with ‘greater things’; they will share in ‘their master’s happiness’ – a clear reference, for those who have ears to hear, of the blessings of the final Kingdom.

If we appreciate the greatness of the blessings brought by faith in Christ, we will be aware of the responsibilities they bring.

REGISTERING FOR SATURDAY AND SUNDAY MASSES

If you wish to attend 5:30pm Saturday Mass or 8:00am Sunday Mass, you need to register with the Parish Office by phone or email.

Register now for Masses up to the end of the year, 26/27 December.

COLLECTION FOR THE HOLY PLACES – WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

This weekend there is the annual “Good Friday” collection for the ministry of the Church in the Holy Land: **270** missionaries look after **55** sanctuaries, **24** parishes, **15** schools, **5** homes for the sick and orphaned, **6** hostels for pilgrims, **3** academic institutions, **2** publishing houses ... giving **over 1,100** jobs to local people, more than **630** housing units for needy families, rebuilding over **1,300** houses in Syria – and, of course, enormous work for people devastated by the blast in Beirut. The **World Day of the Poor** was established in 2017 by Pope Francis to celebrate the end of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, and he chose this day in 2020 for the **Holy Land Collection**. *Collection envelopes are in the church and Parish Office.*

FRATELLI TUTTI

Commentary by Daniel P Horan

Earlier in Chapter 2 of the encyclical, the pope uses the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) to show how the Christian notion of relationship with others transcends the limits and qualifications we are quick to use in isolating ourselves from solidarity with others. By contrast, if we recognize that we are all sisters and brothers to one another, then we have an inherent bond with each other that demands something of us — our love, respect and care.

Francis highlights the demands that a spirit of fraternity places on us in relationship to one another in human society. Too often, the pope says, “we are constantly tempted to ignore others, especially the weak.” He notes that, “for all the progress we have made, we are still ‘illiterate’ when it comes to accompanying, caring for, and supporting the most frail and vulnerable members of our developed societies. We have become accustomed to looking the other way, passing by, ignoring situations until they affect us directly” (64).

St Francis instructed his followers that living the Christian life according to his distinctive vision basically boiled down to “walking in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ,” a phrase that appears throughout his writings. Living like Jesus means prioritizing relationship above all else; it means caring for those in need, regardless of their identity or what affiliations they might have.

Pope Francis lifts this up as not only something reserved for Franciscan friars and sisters, but also for all human beings, who are fundamentally interdependent and connected to one another. How we think of ourselves in relationship to others ought to be governed by this principle of our *a priori* interrelatedness as sisters and brothers. And the way we form our worldviews, make decisions, engage in the public square, and interact with one another at all levels should be grounded in our inextricable *fraternitas* with all. (103).

Crossing borders, building bridges

Early in the document, the pope recalls St Francis’ famous encounter with Sultan Malek al-Kamil at Damietta, Egypt, in 1219. Drawing a connection to that historic episode of mutual respect, peacemaking and fraternity — a shared sense of a fraternal bond between the two men from different cultures and religions — Pope Francis identified a comparable sense of encounter he had with Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, whom he met in Abu Dhabi in 2019. At that meeting, the two religious leaders signed a document on “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together,” which included the shared assertion that, “God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties, and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters.”

The nod to the importance of interreligious dialogue and friendship across differences in the global effort to promote human solidarity is no small gesture. Francis, taking seriously the prioritization of fraternal and sororal relationship with all people modelled by St Francis, describes this social teaching as directed not only to his Christian sisters and brothers, but also addressed to all women and men of good will.

This expansive audience reflects the inclusive vision articulated at the outset of *Laudato Si* and encyclicals of his predecessors, dating back to John XXIII’s 1963 document *Pacem in Terris*, which was geared not only to Catholics and other Christians but also all people of good will.

St Francis is known to have crossed many borders and built many bridges in his time. He intentionally transgressed the social, civil and ecclesial borders of his community to embrace and then live with lepers who had been ostracized from the ordinary life of Assisi. He crossed the border of the Fifth Crusade’s battle to engage in a peaceful encounter and exchange of ideas with the Sultan, despite the vilification of Muslims by the majority of Christian Europe at the time, including and especially by Pope Innocent III. He even 

☞☞ moved across the border of species when he sincerely referred to nonhuman creatures as his “sisters” and “brothers,” recognizing that lines of demarcation between the human and nonhuman are in some ways artificial constructs, given our interdependence on one another and universal reliance on our common source, which is God. *(continued next week)*

WHAT’S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Tuesday 17 Nov Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, religious
 Saturday 21 Nov Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
 TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
 drop items in the special white plastic bin if you come to Mass**

SURFING SEASON ... BE SAFE

So far this season, there have been **466** rescues [*last week 424*] completed by surf lifesavers, and **1,681** first aid treatments [*last week 1,451*] have been performed.



ADVENT DAILY REFLECTION BOOKS

As usual our Diocese has produced another excellent daily reflections book for Advent, this year called, *Adore*. These are **FREE** and available in the church or from the Parish Office.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The annual **Vinnies Christmas Appeal** will be held as usual, 21 November to 6 December. As well as the usual hampers and toys, **from this weekend** please bring in *Christmas cakes, puddings, long-life custard, tinned ham, biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, lollies, tinned veggies, chips, jelly – no cigarette or alcohol products please*. Further details next week.

THIS Sunday’s Readings *on our website*

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A
1st Reading Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31
2nd Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Gospel Matthew 25:14-30

NEXT Sunday’s Readings *on our website*

Christ the King • Year A
1st Reading Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17
2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28
Gospel Matthew 25:31-46

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
 Saturday – **5:30pm** • Sunday – **8:00am**

**Restricted numbers apply ... to attend ...
 you must register beforehand with the Parish Office**

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul	Monday	—
	Tuesday	17:30
	Wednesday	09:00
	Thursday	09:00
	Friday	09:30

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the Northern Illawarra Parishes

Patrick Vaughan • *Parish Priest* ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • *Assisting*

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive
 ☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📧 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515
 📧 **thirroul@dow.org.au**

Parish Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday Friday

9:00am to 3:30pm Magda Pires
10:00am to 3:00pm Maureen Franciskovic

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au Parish School of St Michael ☎ 4267 2560