THE Wednesday WORD

Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 15th November 2026

The 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time — Matthew 25:14-15. 19-20

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.

Read

This Sunday's Gospel : A STORY ABOUT TALENTS

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out. Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. "Sir," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made." His master said to him, "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."'

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...

It is encouraging to think of all the talents which friends and neighbours have and which I don't have. It is all part of the gifts of the Spirit, which Paul sees as making up the whole Body of Christ. Everyone has a special contribution to make. As for me, it is extraordinary that God created me with all my twists, defects, fears and failures and it is precisely because of those boils, sores, abscesses that God loves me, helps me and guides me to work out my salvation. And it is just possible that there may be friends who can think that God has given me talents which make a tiny contribution to the happiness and goodness of the world. In the longer version of this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus mentions a man with just one talent who hides it in the ground: the master calls him "wicked and lazy" and has him thrown out. Why is he so severely treated? This is surely someone who resolutely turns his (or her) back on the goodness she (or he) has received and refuses to work with it for the Lord's purposes or for anyone else's. Such a talent goes to waste and merely rusts and corrupts. If I know anyone like that, it is just worth asking whether, with infinite and patient kindness, I can help that person to release their talent and bring it to blossom. **Just think for a moment: what is your best talent? Is it a gift, skill or humour which brings joy and happiness to those around you? Are you like the man who buried his talent in the ground, or do you use this skill or gift or wisdom to bring joy to others?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.

Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit.

You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.

Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **TALENT**

(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)

As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Wednesday Word Plus +

If you'd like to spend more prayerful time with God through the First and Second Readings, follow the same process for praying with the Gospel (overleaf). Gently place the First or Second Reading and Fr Henry's reflection into that same prayerful rhythm for more fruitful meditation with God's Word.



First Reading: *A Woman about the House*

Proverbs 31:10-13.19-20.30-31

A perfect wife - who can find her? She is far beyond the price of pearls. Her husband's heart has confidence in her; from her he will derive no little profit. Advantage and not hurt she brings him all the days of her life. She is always busy with wool and with flax; she does her work with eager hands. She sets her hands to the distaff; her fingers grasp the spindle. She holds out her hand to the poor; she opens her arms to the needy. Charm is deceitful, and beauty empty; the woman who is wise is the one to praise. Give her a share in what her hands have worked for, and let her works tell her praises at the city gates.

The gospel parable is about a man who is an astute administrator, and this first reading delicately pairs it with a woman who is a shrewd businesswoman, running her household and her cottage industry capably, wisely and generously in reverence for the Lord. The Bible is often felt to be unduly male-oriented (an accusation often made also against the Church), but this was the normal state of society in biblical times. Nevertheless, a succession of remarkable women appear in the pages of the Old Testament; they are real partners to their husbands, and they often provide the motive force in the pursuit of the fulfilment of God's promises. In the New Testament too, besides Mary and Jesus' female followers in the gospels, we see Jesus valuing women. Particularly the playful scenes between Jesus and the Samaritan woman and the Canaanite (or Syro-Phoenician) woman spring to mind. In Paul's letters and apostolate women play important roles, even leadership roles, working with Paul to establish his communities – women like Chloe, Phoebe, Junia. Indeed, the first convert to Christianity in Europe was a woman, Lydia.

What gifts do I have that (like the gifts of the woman in Proverbs) give praise to the Lord?

Second Reading: *A Thief in the Night*

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

You will not be expecting us to write anything to you, brothers, about 'times and seasons', since you know very well that the Day of the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night. It is when people are saying, 'How quiet and peaceful it is,' that the worst suddenly happens, as suddenly as labour pains come on a pregnant woman; and there will be no way for anybody to evade it. But it is not as if you live in the dark, my brothers, for that Day to overtake you like a thief. No, you are all sons of light and sons of the day: we do not belong to the night or to darkness, so we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else does, but stay wide awake and sober.

Paul had obviously taught the new Christians at Thessalonika that Christ had conquered death, so that death had no more grasp on Christians. So they were puzzled that Christians nevertheless died. Paul explains in his letter to them that Christians who have died will be the first to rise up and join the returning Christ in his triumphant procession. Only after them will come those who are still alive. However, Paul's principal stress is on the unpredictability of the Day of the Lord, that final day when the Lord will set right all injustice. It makes little difference whether I imagine meeting the Lord on the great Day of the Final Judgement, or meeting with the Lord personally at my own death. I know that it is very unlikely that I will be ready ("If only I had just a little more time to prepare!" is my constant excuse) and that I will not be in a fit state to face the glorious, pure wonder of divine love. The Day will come as unexpectedly as a thief in the night or the pains of childbirth, with that same finality and inescapability.

How may I best prepare for the coming of the Day of the Lord?

"That final day when the Lord will set right all injustice."

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