

Use God-given talents well

33rd Sunday of the Year (November 17): (R3) Matthew 25:14-30; (R1) Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; (R2) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6.

In Sunday's parable God is like a master and we are like his servants. He gives each different talents. It matters not if they be great or little. The point our Lord wanted to make was that each of us must use the talents God has given us no matter how great or little they may be.

First, he said that we shall be held accountable for our use of time.

Life is just a minute,
Only sixty seconds in it,
Forced upon me, can't refuse it.
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it,
But it's up to me to use it.
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute,
But eternity is in it.

In the parable Jesus also encourages us to dream great dreams — to make our lives count for something.

We might ask ourselves, how do we use our time? Do we put God first or do we put self first? Do we care about others? Do we take more than we give? Do we look for the opportunity to share our faith with others?

Not long before his death due to alcohol-related liver disease, Mickey Mantle said, "God gave me the ability to play baseball and I wasted it. I was given so much and I blew it. I'm going to spend the rest of my life trying to make it up. I want to start giving something back."

How sad to discover at the end that we have been cultivating an insignificant, self-centered or vain life.

A third point of this parable is that our view of God affects how we live. The first two servants trusted their master's commands. Even when he was gone, they proved trustworthy and wise in their handling of the master's property. And in the end, they earned the master's trust and



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

fellowship. But the third servant viewed his master as a hard, unpredictable man and acted accordingly.

How do we view God? Do we see him as a hard-to-please taskmaster? Or do we remember those Scripture verses that speak of God as kind, gentle, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love? If we trust God as a leader, we will be able to follow. If we trust God as provider, we will give of our resources generously. If we trust in God's love and mercy, we will love and show mercy to others. Everything starts with our view of God.

Finally, in this parable Jesus teaches us that what we do here in life has eternal significance.

Lois Cheney in her book, *God is No Fool*, tells a parable about a man to whom God gave a priceless gift — the capacity for love. The man was grateful and humble, and he carried this capacity for love like a jewel and he walked tall and with purpose.

From time to time he would show this jewel to others, who would smile and touch it. These touches dirtied the jewel a bit. So the man built a box to protect his jewel. And he decided to show it only to those who would treat it with respect.

But that didn't work. Some people tried to break into the box. So he built a stronger box. And decided to show it only to someone who had earned the right to see it. Time passed on, and only once or twice would he open the box to show it to a

passerby. The passerby would look and look, and then would back away from the old man, shaking his head.

The old man died, and went to God. He said, "You gave me a precious gift years ago, and I've kept it safe and as lovely as when you gave it to me." He opened the box. God glanced into the box and in it was a lizard — an ugly, laughing lizard. And God walked away from him, too.

When love is guarded and unexposed, it turns into an ugly lizard. Life is not to be hoarded, but to be lived fully, to be invested in love, in hope, in faith so that a wonderful harvest of lasting influence will be reaped. To do otherwise is to bury our talents.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

DAILY READINGS

Monday, November 18
Revelation 1:1-4, 2:1-5A,
Psalms 1:1-4, 6, Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday, November 19
Revelation 3:1-6, 14:22; Psalms
15:2-5; Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday, November 20
Revelation 4:1-11; Psalms
150:1-6; Luke 19:11-28

Thursday, November 21
Revelation 5:1-10; Psalms
149:1-6, 9; Luke 19:41-44

Friday, November 22
Revelation 10:8-11; Psalms
119:14, 24, 72, 103, 111, 131;
Luke 19:45-48

Saturday, November 23
Revelation 11:4-12; Psalms
144:1-2, 9-10; Luke 20:27-40



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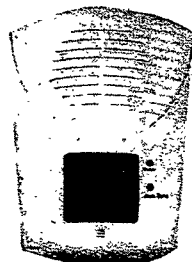
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