

THIRTY THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A

“INVESTMENT, RISK & RETURN IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE”

This basic message of today’s parable is that investment, risk and return are the model of the spiritual life. We cannot simply hold on to the talents we have been given by God; we must risk in giving them away, in order that the investment made will reap a return.

How are we to understand this parable? Think for a moment of the inner life of God. God is gift. God is self-donation. The divine being is a kind of ‘letting be’; a ‘being for the other’. We see this in the relations between the trinitarian persons. The Father is the Father only in relation to the Son. The Son is the Son only in relation to the Father. The Spirit is the relationship between the Father and the Son. God is a ‘letting be’. Therefore, if you want God’s life in you, you must be conformed to His way of being.”ⁱ

This seems counter intuitive. We think that, if we want God’s life in us, we need to take. No. “God is not taking; God is a ‘letting be’. Therefore, we must learn to *give* if we are to *have* God.”ⁱⁱ

We should consider the talents in today’s parable as everything we receive from God: our life, our breath, our very being, all of our powers of mind and will. Because they come from God, they are meant to become gifts. If you cling to them in the manner of that third servant, they don’t grow. Rather, they wither away.ⁱⁱⁱ

Pope Francis provides us with an interesting reflection on today's parable of the talents:

“On his return, the master judges what [his servants] have done: he praises the first two while he throws the third one out into the outer darkness because, through fear, he had hidden his talent, withdrawing into himself. A Christian who withdraws into himself, who hides everything that the Lord has given him, is a Christian who ... does not thank God for everything God has given him!

This [parable] tells us that the expectation of the Lord's return is the time of action – we are in the time of action – the time in which we should bring God's gifts to fruition, not for ourselves but for him, for the Church, for others. ... To seek to increase goodness in the world ... it is important not to turn in on ourselves, burying our own talent, our spiritual, intellectual, and material riches, everything that the Lord has given us, rather to open ourselves, to be supportive, to be attentive to others.”^{iv}

The Holy Father gives us a final encouragement in the face of today's parable of the talents and the Second Coming of Christ:

“Dear brothers and sisters, may looking at the Last Judgment never frighten us: rather, may it impel us to live the present better!”^v

ⁱ Fr. Robert Barron, *Sermon for 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time*, taken from <http://www.wordonfire.org/resources/homily/parable-of-the-talents/818/>

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130424_udienza-generale.html

^v Ibid