

 Sunday, November 19, 2023

#Homily by Father Karl Daigle

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle A-2023

In 1985, a wide array of musical artists came together to perform the song, “We Are the World.” Their purpose was to raise money and bring attention to the plight of the starving people in Africa. It was a smashing success. Through sales of the song and other related merchandise, they raised over 63 million dollars for the people of Africa. It is the 8<sup>th</sup> best-selling single of all time. This charitable endeavor is an inspiring example of what can happen when individuals and groups of people proactively bring their talents together for a cause beyond themselves.

That is exactly what Jesus is calling us to “be” and “do” in today’s Gospel known as the Parable of the Talents. Jesus calls us to be like the servants with 5 and 2 talents, by generously and proactively using our God given talents to go beyond ourselves and to “make a difference” in the lives of other people. Jesus places this ongoing call within the context of building the Kingdom of God on earth. As Christians, living for, and building the Kingdom of God, is meant to be at the forefront of

our minds, hearts, and actions. In the prayer of all prayers, the “Our Father,” we pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is heaven.” Do you realize that this prayer is ultimately answered by you and I? In sharing our talents for the sake of the Kingdom, we allow our Risen Lord to bless and love His people in and through us. We allow the Lord to gradually make earth more like heaven.

One biblical theme that spans the entirety of both the Old and New Testament is that of stewardship. Stewardship involves the awareness all that we “have” and all that we “are” comes from God as gift. This gift comes with the responsibility that we are proactive and conscientious in bettering the people, talents, authority, and opportunities entrusted to our care. When it comes to our God given talents, we are good stewards whenever we make the time and effort to: acquire ongoing knowledge and formation in our areas of giftedness and responsibility; talk to and learn from other people who share the same gifts; and to pray for, and respond to, opportunities to use our gifts in the service of others. We want to develop the eager and proactive attitude: “Jesus what can I do to serve you, by serving Your people? Please provide me with the opportunities

and help me to respond with love and generosity.” We remain grounded and Christ centered in our approach to our talents, whenever we keep in mind that the focus of our gifts is not, “Look how awesome I am.” It is, “Look at what the Lord has done for me. Isn’t God awesome!!!”

One common temptation is “talent envy.” We struggle to recognize our talents. We are not at peace with them. We want another person’s giftedness. If we share the same talent with another person, we want more of it than them. Overall, I am not an envious person, but at one time in my life, I was envious of a particular type of person. I was envious of those who connected and socialized with others so easily and gracefully. Those who people spontaneously gravitated toward. Those who could rally people around them. Those who had endless social energy. Those who could talk easily to both friend and stranger alike.

I wanted these gifts for myself, but at the time, I was too self-conscious, self-critical, and insecure. On top of that, I was more introverted. Even though I was a more people orientated introvert, I still had more limited social energy and stamina. As I have grown in self-love and self-confidence, I have become somewhat more like what I used to envy. I will probably never be a natural,

but I have come along way with the grace of God. Over time, I no longer envy those blessed with what I consider a most remarkable gift. Instead, I now observe them in a spirit of “awe and wonder.” I celebrate their gift and try to learn from them, while simultaneously celebrating my own approach to bonding with other people and leading them.


We would all do well to keep in mind the wisdom of St. Paul. He tells us that there are many gifts but the same Lord, and that there are many parts, but we are all one body. He also provides us with the thought-provoking analogy of the human body and reminds us that all parts of the are equally important. This reminds us that our spiritual, personal, and professional talents, are equally important, because in their own unique way, they build up the Kingdom of God in a way that no one else can.

Even though there are a diversity of gifts, all of them should be celebrated, because they all have value for the Kingdom. Instead of comparing ourselves favorably or unfavorably to others, we are called to see and embrace, how all of our talents are necessary and irreplaceable within the Body of Christ and the human family. The “We Are the World” project reveals that there is a special grace and power that is created when we come together

as one, as a community, as a human family, instead of just being solo artists and lone rangers. This sentiment is captured in the refrain of the song: “We are the world. We are the children. We are the ones who make a brighter day, so let’s start giving. There’s a choice we’re making. We are saving our own lives. It’s true we’ll make a better day, just you and me.” Let’s work together to bless, heal, and transform our own slice of the world.

Mike Tomlin is the head coach of my beloved Pittsburgh Steelers. He has a saying that I just love. The saying is, “I refuse to live in my fears.” The servant who buried his one and only talent did just that. We “live in our fears” whenever we: fear our talents are insignificant; fear our talents will not be appreciated; fear our talents will not make a difference; or fear the time and effort that goes into developing and sharing our talents. There is always a place, or a type of person, that will be blessed by our particular talents. By proactively seeking them out, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will discover a sense of mission. A sense of mission that enables us to see that we are doing our own part to build up the Kingdom of God, for the glory of God.

We now turn our gaze to the Eucharistic table. As we do, let us pray that as we receive Jesus, the Bread of Life, that through His Spirit, we will bring His new and more abundant life to the world around us.

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