



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

19th November 2023

Thirty-Third Sunday



Fr David says....

When I think of talents, I do think of people like my friend Jacob Portelli, the Maltese Harpist, who had enthralled us a couple of months ago at St James's with his amazing skill of playing the harp. To top it all, I know that he also plays the cello, the violin and also is a cardiographer. I look at him and say – God has gifted you with lots of talents and you are using them to the full. Before he embarked on his little tour, he visited most of the monasteries in Malta and gifted them with his gift of harp playing for free as he did to us. I marvel when I see people like him with so much talent and yet still grounded and unassuming. He plays because of his love of music and his love to help others encounter God through his talent of music. He is using his skills of music not only for his own self-gratification but in order to give joy to others. However, once you make use of your gifts whatever they are, you also risk other's judgements and jealousy. Some people do not make use of their talents because they are afraid of being criticised and judged. Others want a stress free life without the hassle of hard work. When you feel trusted by those who have authority over you and they give you freedom to express yourself then you will feel enthused to flourish. When you feel frightened under your authority figures, because they do not trust you completely in what you will deliver, then we tend to deliver mediocrity.

This Sunday's gospel passage continues from last Sunday's. It is a long parable telling us what the kingdom of heaven is like – that is what it is like to experience grace coming into our world. Most people find this parable difficult because of the master's seemingly exaggerated anger and also he is very hard on the third servant who was already less gifted than the others. If this is what the kingdom of heaven is like, then it is bad news indeed. The key to such an interpretation is to remember Jesus's situation when he gave this teaching. As with last week's passage, he was at the end of his public ministry, frustrated at the hardness of heart of the Leaders of the people. The Mosaic tradition had taught generosity of spirit and compassion for the oppressed. The leaders had let this glorious tradition become their personal possession, an excuse for meanness and exclusiveness, a way of protecting their positions of privilege.

Jesus is highly indignant at what they have done with God's gift and rightly so. We need to enter into his feelings. The God of the bible is so passionately committed to the cause of the poor that when they are ill-treated, his anger flares up. The property in the parable then, is not personal wealth. The property in the parable is God's precious gift intended to multiply and be life giving for all. Its true purpose is distorted by the third servant's meanness that is why he is called good for nothing. The parable then gives us two messages. To those who have been made to feel excluded from the kingdom (tax-collectors and prostitutes), Jesus brings the good news that this is totally against God's will. In fact God is very angry that they have been excluded. To his disciples he issues a stern warning. Do not fall prey to a similar narrow mindedness. The history of the Church like our individual stories tell us how right he was to warn them. We all fall into the trap of seeing our

talents as our personal possessions that we can do what we like with. God's will is that we see them as gifts to be shared so that they can be multiplied. The teaching of Jesus so full of potential for transforming the world and yet so often hidden under a bushel. Christians have dug a hole in the ground and buried it. Nature which God has made so bountiful, now becomes a matter for personal greed with resultant scarcities. Family traditions of openness to all, allowed to degenerate into snobbishness and racism. Individual talents – physical, mental and spiritual intended to be a blessing for families and societies, become things to be bought and sold. Do we know that we celebrate Jesus who made us conscious of this betrayal?.

The parable is not all negative. The Master is also someone we can celebrate. He is the kind of leader who does not cling to power. He entrusts his property to those who work with him without counting the risk. This parable is crucial teaching for our modern Western Culture which glorifies mistrust as not merely necessary but actually beneficial. People who have no trust and confidence in themselves, in others and in life, end up losing even what they have. On the contrary people who have that kind of trust end up being given more. Jesus's message is go ahead and trust. How we need teachers and leaders like that. He issues a stern warning to those who have no faith. Learn to believe in yourself.

We are all called to build the kingdom of God, but no two people have exactly the same task in this project which we call creation. Each of us is called to being God's love, presence, light and peace into a particular world. This is our calling. This is the unique set of talents that has been entrusted to each of us by God. Do I believe in this? Do I have the confidence to acknowledge God's given talents and share them with others in the community? Do you feel that you are being called to share those talents within the parish?

Today our thanksgiving focusses on these sets of talents that each of us has been given, and repentance is for those times when we as individuals have hidden our talents and failed to build the kingdom and our prayer is that we will each follow our unique calling more closely in the future.

Is God through this week's liturgy nudging you to be part of the many ministries within our parish? Many of our parishioners are making use of their talents within the parish and I wish to thank you all for taking God's invitation to contribute seriously. For others who feel reluctant for some reason or another – may your find the courage to come forward and offer your talents to the community of St James's.

Thank you for reading my reflection once again this week and God bless you all.



All the Masses being said at St James' will be live streamed
<https://www.churchservices.tv/pettswood>
For the protection of all attend St James we request that you do not video live Masses using your phone during services.
 You can also take part in Adoration and Benediction by live stream.
 All events for live streaming are listed on the streaming site.

Office Phone Number: 01689 827100
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 Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,
 or by appointment.

Thirty-Third Sunday Saturday 18th November Sunday 19th November	06:00pm Cyril Anthony Soyza RIP (S Soyza) Wellbeing of Victoria Nathan-Rogers (M Rogers) 09:15am Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) 11:00am John McPartlin RIP (McPartlin & Clubbs Family) Harry McAleer RIP (G Mulroy) Tracy Wrafter RIP (T Wrafter)
Feria Monday 20th November	10:00am Kerry Murphy's health
The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Tuesday 21st November	10:00am In Thanksgiving for Granddaughters Mollie & Alice (Jon Cunningham)
Saint Cecilia Wednesday 22nd November	10.00am Chris Barrett RIP (Loma Barrett & Family) 10.45am - 11.15am Eucharistic Adoration
Feria Thursday 23rd November	10:00am Mary & Mucker & Family (K Murphy)
Saint Andrew Dung-Lac Friday 24th November	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Our Lord Jesus Christ, King Of The Universe Saturday 25th November Sunday 26th November	06.00pm Deceased Brothers of Council 327 of Knights of St Columba 09:15am Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) 11:00am Sexton & Melluish Families (P Melluish) Keith Dale RIP (R Scott)

Second Collections

Next weeks second collection will be for National Youth Sunday on 26th November



The current needs for this week are for:

- Desserts
- Longlife Milk
- Cold Tinned Meat
- Fruit Juice
- Childrens Toothbrushes
- Shaving Gel
- Deoderant

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>