

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Aug 31st 2013

God himself has taught you to love one another. 1 Thes. 4

A certain man was going on a journey.

He called in his servants and handed his funds over to them according to each one's abilities. Matthew 25

A number of years ago, I had the joy of serving in a parish where the Parish Council and its committees saw their role as calling forth the gifts of the whole community. Something incredibly wonderful happened as more and more people came forward, responding to the consistent invitation. We found ourselves working hard to create more ways to use the wonderful skills and creativity and generosity that started to gather. People saw their response as part of their baptismal commitment - to be one with Jesus, in being for others. It was empowering. Offering some of their gifts, and having those gifts welcomed and affirmed, people were discovering that they had even more gifts that they had not ever recognized, not ever exercised. We all discovered what power came from the collaborative efforts that were happening - each of our gifts complimented and strengthened others. People realized they could multiply the effect of their service by showing others what they had learned, empowering them to carry on what they had been doing, and moving on to discovering new gifts they themselves had to share. New ministries were born. And the liturgy truly became the source and summit of our life - nourishing our faith for self-donation and celebrating our life as a community gathered for service. And, of course, people were generous financially in a community whose vision they shared and which called forth their gifts. We all invested ourselves in a community that seemed to be over-flowing with resources.

He called in his servants and handed his funds over to them according to each one's abilities.

It is wonderful to pause today to remember that Jesus has entrusted to us - put us in charge of - tremendous resources. For us who are baptized into him, they are truly his resources. It is good to remember that I probably don't fully appreciate what I have been given, and therefore, what I have to invest. And I probably don't fully appreciate the gifts that others around me have, and what resources they might be able to share. Even when I am stretched and learn new skills - becoming a better listener, changing a long standing pattern and discovering a new ability, taking a risk that pays off many times over - the inspiration and gift is from the Lord. Whether we are practicing better patience, greater self-confidence and courage, fuller chastity, deeper generosity, these are all fruits of his Spirit - given to us for the benefit of all, for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Dear Lord,

help us to receive and come to appreciate the gifts you give us, to develop further and to share with others.

Help us to be more generous, risky, free.

Inspire us to see and trust your gifts in others.

Let us all call forth the gifts of others in our communities.

May we all one day be gathered to share your joy.

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