

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

In the Hollywood movie titled "Hidden Figures" the film is based on the true story when NASA, the National Aeronautical Space Administration, employed well educated African American women, to work on mathematical equations for rocket launches and space travel. They called these woman computers and indeed they were instrumental in discovering the formulas for getting our first astronauts into orbit and safely back to earth. They were a hidden talent at a time when our country really needed their giftedness but also at a time when our nation didn't want to acknowledge, or give credit to them, based on their race and gender.

The Church sometimes refers to this type of apathy or negligence as "social sin" when society on the whole participates in it either actively or passively. All of us have talent. None of us should hide our talent. We all have been given a uniqueness that can and ought to be contributed to society. How actively or passively we do that really depends on our trust in God or not. The more we trust God the more generous we tend to be with our talents.

As a disciple, to trust God is about being in relationship with Him. A relationship of trust. God trusts us. He has entrusted us with special gifts and talents, but He also expects a return on His investment. He doesn't want us to squander or hide the talents that He's given us.

The Greek word for talent in today's Gospel means a large sum of money. Maybe a year's wage or more but it is a big sum of money. In today's parable, the Master is going on a long journey and so he calls in three of his best employees to oversee and manage the estate. Each one has been given a chance to do something great with this opportunity. The first man is given 5 talents, the second gets 2 and the third gets 1.

When the master returns, the first man gives his report, He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'

The second man was also pleased to report that his 2 talents were also invested and he too doubled the return on his investment.

But Of course this is all about man number 3. The third guy didn't lose any money. It was all there safe and sound but that was it. Why? Because He was afraid. He didn't want to take a risk. He said it was because he thought the master was a strict and demanding authoritarian.

Well that may have been somewhat true in the sense that the master had clear expectations from his executives, which was to do their very best with what was given to them.

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are!" Teddy Roosevelt

The third man did nothing, he played it safe, because he was afraid to rock the boat, because he didn't like conflict, or didn't think he was smart enough or equipped with the right skill set, well that kind of reasoning and excuse making didn't end well for him, at all.

Not only was he fired immediately without references he was cut off from any chance of ever getting back on his feet again. He was also humiliated in front of his peers because they got raises and promotions and were entrusted with even more money that came from Mr. Play- it- safe. His fear and lack of trust in the master earned him a place among the lost and suffering. A dramatic ending for a poor guy who just wanted to play it safe.

That's how God works. If we don't use the talents He gives us, he will find someone that will. How do we do that? Trusting God. To trust God means we will have to enter more deeply into our relationship with the Lord so we can know Him and trust Him. Our relationship with our creator is not meant to be static or stagnant. It's a dynamic relationship of risks, and rejoicing.

We have lots of opportunities at SJN to use our talents.

One organization that provides this opportunity is the St. Vincent de Paul Society ministry that serves the poor and needy in the Yukon zip code. You have always been generous with your finances with St. Vincent de Paul Society. On behalf of the hundreds of families and individuals whom you have helped this past year, to turn their utilities back on, get prescriptions filled, pay landlords, and sometimes provide temporary housing, I want to say on their behalf, Thank You!

Those little brown poor boxes by each door on your way out of church are staying filled by you each week so that people in need can find help throughout the year. But they need more than just your talents, they also need your time. They need more volunteers. This is their one week each year that they get to recruit so if you feel God may be calling you to serve with them, and to walk with those who, not only need financial help, but need a face of compassion and a voice of acceptance, visit with one of our Vincentians after mass today.

I'm very aware that there are so many good causes and Charities doing great work in our community and around the world, and that it can feel overwhelming. How many times have we heard people say if I win the lottery I'm going to ...

Most of us have good and generous hearts, but not all of us have developed the skill set to manage our finances in a way that gives us the freedom to be as generous as we'd like. We don't want to become like the third guy in the parable but we don't know how to get out of debt. The Dave Ramsey course called, Financial Peace University, spells out exactly how, using Biblical tactics, to get debt free, save money, and eventually become a missionary disciple that manages not just their finances, but becomes a good steward of time and talent.

The next Financial Peace course begins January 7.

We really do have so much in our parish and community for which to be Thankful.

One thing that I'm thankful for is the Ministerial Alliance here in Yukon. There are many pastors and ministers of many different denominations and they are all passionate, committed and talented leaders. We don't all agree with each other's politics or theology but we still gather each month to pray together. Two things in particular that we pray for is Compassionate Hands, which provides help with utilities and transportation to doctor's visits or the pharmacy using the CH care-a-van. The other thing we pray for is the Manna Pantry. This local food pantry is accepting turkeys and hams this week so people can have a special Thanksgiving day. They too need volunteers and board members.

The Annual Ministerial Alliance Thanksliving food drive and sing a long is this Monday at the 10 west main event center. Our SJN choristers will be singing there this Monday evening, where you can bring any kind of non-perishable food items for their food drive, Monday evening at 10 west main event center.

Steve Goodier, Protestant minister and author of inspirational books:

Money is not the only commodity that is fun to give. We can give time, we can give our expertise, we can give our love or simply give a smile. What does that cost? The point is, none of us can ever run out of something worthwhile to give.

Jesus wants us to be givers and not just observers.

He doesn't want us to be a hidden figure but to go and figure it out.

If we don't he will find someone else that will, and we are the ones who are left standing outside.

What are my talents and what's keeping them from being doubled?