

Only one week left in our Liturgical Year

Next Sunday is the feast of Christ the King

And then Advent begins

So it is like a warning shot for Thanksgiving and Christmas

We know they are coming

And what do we do?

Prepare, right?

We don't wait until the guests show up

Then begin a meal plan

We know about how many will be at the Thanksgiving dinner

And we get a 20 # turkey because 10 lbs is not enough

Or we get a 10 # one because while leftovers are great

We don't want them for 2 weeks

Whatever way we go, it is a result of planning

The same for Christmas, birthdays, weddings

All the big events in our lives

Whether they are one-time events or repeating every year

But why is it we seem to fail to plan for a huge event in our lives?

One we will all face at some point

Although we do not know when that might be

We will all face death

We will all come face to face with Jesus Christ at some point

We don't think it will be this afternoon

We don't think it will be this year, even

But we might just be wrong

I saw a movie recently

An old man received a letter

You've won a million dollars!

This was all he saw

Even when the small print was pointed out,

All he saw was that he won

And he insisted on going to collect

His wife stated:

I didn't even know he wanted to be a millionaire

If it was so important to him

He should have thought of it when he was still working

What about us

What is it that you want in life?

It has been said that there is only one real failure in life

It is not to become a saint

Everything we do and say should be with this in mind

It is never too early to start

But there will come a point when time runs out

This life is where we become saints

And that is the meaning of our readings these last weeks of our year

Get ready! Prepare yourselves!

You will meet Christ soon

So how do we prepare?

It begins with Fear of the Lord

The root of all wisdom

That is what our first reading is about

Yes, it is put in the context of a wise woman

But it is there for all of us

To fear the Lord is not a servile fear

It is not the fear of a Hollywood movie

It is to understand the meaning of life

To love God with all our heart, mind and soul

And to seek his ways

To appreciate the unsurpassable value of faith in God and in Christ

To live a self-sacrificial life for others

Imitating the one who sacrificed everything for you

Beginning at home

Husband for wife

Wife for husband

Parents for children

Children for parents and siblings

Then it spreads into our workplaces

Our parish, our city and nation

We know how it is supposed to work

We recognize it when it doesn't work

The woman praised in our reading shows how it is to work

She sacrifices for her family, not for material gain

But it is not easy

We may find ourselves insulted

Even persecuted for saying the truth

**But the truth is that the foundation to a healthy society is
marriage and the family**

Marriage between one man and one woman

And the foundation of a healthy marriage is fear of the Lord

The key to wisdom

The key to a successful and productive life

The key to happiness

Here and hereafter

God gives us what we need to live this life

We see this in our Gospel on the talents

What are these talents?

They were a great sum of money

Each one amounting to up to 15 years' worth of wages

So to the one, a whole lifetime of wages at once

To the second, the most productive years of his life

To the third, not a small amount

Even 15 years at minimum wage at once is quite a bit

Close to \$250,000 in today's economy

But then Christ does something not expected

For his listeners, they would expect the third man to be praised

That would be the norm for stewards at that time

Not risking what they were given

Not allowing it to be stolen

Being prepared to return all of it to the master

But God does not expect the ordinary

He gives us our gifts and talents

And He expects that we will risk them and invest them

Faith must be invested in ways that will make it grow

It is another paradox we face

Faith has to be given away in order to have more

It is not enough to be a 'good person'

However we define 'good'

It is not enough to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

We have a demanding, loving, jealous God

One who reaps where He does not sow

He gave thousands to these three

With no specific instruction on how to invest

Simply according to their ability

And off he goes

Only to return at an undetermined time to settle his accounts

So if we were called home today, what is my account balance?

How am I doing in living my faith?

In sharing my faith?

We all have talents, gifts from God

For the people in our Gospel, they are represented by money

For us, they are time, talent and treasure

And as St Paul tells us

The day of the Lord is coming

Stay alert and sober

So how are we preparing?

How are we using the talents given us?

Are we burying them because we don't feel comfortable?

Do I seek ways to serve?

Or do I sit back and wait?

Thinking others will step up

Others will take on leadership roles in the dinners

In the men's group

Others will usher, lector or serve as Eucharistic minister

Others will serve in the various councils

Others will teach CCD or confirmation

Our talents can be a blessing

They can be a means of judgment

If we try to hold onto what we have

We will be judged by what we do not have

It we use them as a gift

They will become a blessing

Even if the world sees them as failures

God sees them as if in a mirror

If we give as He gives

Using our talents in service to others

We will one day hear these words:

Well done my good and faithful servant;

Come; enter your master's joy