**15th November Collect, Reading, Reflection, and Intercessions**

**Collect**

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Gospel Matthew 25.14-30**

Jesus said to his disciples, 14‘The kingdom of heaven is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. 17In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

19After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, “Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.” 21His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” 22And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, “Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.” 23His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

24Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, “Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; 25so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.” 26But his master replied, “You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? 27Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. 28So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents.

29For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 30As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”’

**Reflection**

Often the stories Jesus tells us are just that, stories used to explain a point, or encourage us to think. This story of the man who divided his money between 3 servants, each given a descending amount of money to use wisely in his absence raises all sorts of questions if we try to take it literally. So don’t!

Instead try to ponder what gifts do you have?

Some things will be obvious, I can think of several people who would agree a certain St Buryan lady is extremely talented with her needles! Others will agree on the talent of the local artist. While others will want to point out the stunning beauty of someone’s garden.

The thing is that these people are like the first and second men, who took the “talents” – the money and invested it. They doubled it, in using their skills they brought not only joy and contentment to themselves but also to others.

Other folk have a great skill, and yet life circumstances means that they lack the time, or opportunity to practice their talent regularly. But when they do, they also bring great joy. I will spare the blushes of those I am thinking about for this!

Finally, there is the man whose fear was so great that he would rather hide the talent than risk using it. How I wonder are we like this man, choosing to listen to the voices in our heads that say “we cannot do this” or not grasping the courage to try to use our gift, our skill.

So often when taking a funeral service I hear folk talk about the deceased with some regret that although they were a great artist or musician, chef or swimmer, they rarely if ever found the time to do that thing that was their gift, their skill. What made them special, and unique was given to them by God as surely as the talents were given to the men in this story.

When we don’t make space and time to do the things that are a gift from God for us, then we are like the child in the stories of old who refused to unwrap gifts because the package was so pretty, and so never enjoyed the gift inside!

So how might you be able to use the skills you have over this period of lockdown, how might you feel if you were able to have a go at that thing you love doing, which makes you feel alive. Remember Irenaeus said “The Glory of God is a human being Fully Alive” Go and be the glory of God!

**Prayers by Lucy Ellis**

Father God, we join one another in demonstrating our faith in you.

You have shown faith in us by sending your Son to be our Saviour.

Give us the strength of faith to follow you without being diverted by the pressures and temptations of the world.

Let the abundance of the life your Son has promised be centred on you, Lord,

starting and ending with divine things and bringing the human things we live by and the things we want to rectify, into sharper focus.

We pray for all people that they may hear and believe the word of God.

**Lord in Your Mercy Hear Our Prayer.**

We pray for our archbishops, our bishops, and clergy in our parishes

as they lead our Church in its mission. We pray for all sovereigns and political leaders, that they may imitate the righteous rule of Christ. We pray for the world and for peace and that fractured relationships between nations can be improved gradually over time with each new generation.

As we honour you, so may we respect and stand in awe of your creation, Lord.

We marvel at the mountains and the oceans, we find endless interest in the wildlife, and we give thanks for the sun and the rain. Help us not to underestimate the forces of nature or the ways in which we can damage nature by our actions.

God of forgiveness and justice, who gives us our daily bread; who watches over us, day and night; who knows our every need and every failing: grant us we pray, the gift to forgive others as you forgive us.

**Lord in Your Mercy Hear Our Prayer.**

We pray for the life of our communities and for all people in their daily life and work here as they work to adapt to new circumstances. We pray for the young and for our schoolchildren and all those who support them.

We pray for the elderly, those who may be lonely and those who fear the winter months. Wherever there is distress we ask, Lord, that your loving embrace brings comfort.

We give thanks for the comfort and unconditional friendship that pets bring.

Look with tender care on those who are sick in mind, body or spirit, remembering especially those in urgent need of our prayers who we bring into our minds now.

We give thanks for those who now rejoice in the fellowship of your saints; and we commend our loved ones whom we now mourn to your almighty love, that they too may rest in peace and rise in glory.

**Lord in your mercy Hear Our prayer**

Lord God, Deal gently with our hopes and fears, nurture the people you would have us be and bring colour to our lives and dreams. Smile on the work of our hands, fashion our vision for the future and fan the wind of change. Creator God, who makes all things new, challenge the drabness of our lives and transform our poverty into the riches of your grace. Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**