

Homily.33OrdA
St. Bernard Church
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TRANSFORMING TALENTS

It's popular in America to interpret today's Gospel about the talents as a way of reinforcing our desire to become more and more successful in life. It's actually a lot more about knowing our true Master, loving Him and serving Him by imitating His love and generosity.

What does the Gospel tell us to help us know our Master better?

Well, first of all, the Master trusts us. He's going to be away a long time, and for all this time He is going to give us control of His possessions. He is a very trusting person.

Secondly, He knows us well. He knows our abilities, so well that He does not even give us specific instructions.

So what does the Master want us to do?

He wants us to take His place. As Jesus says in John 13:15, "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

St. John tell us in 1 John 2:6, "Whoever claims to abide in Jesus ought to live just as He lived."

What does it mean to live just as Jesus lived? What should be our goal? What is really possible?

The answer is in 2 Peter 1:3-4. This is a shocking statement of what God's expectations are for us. I wonder how conscious we are of what we're truly capable of with God's grace.

Here's what Peter says: "**God's divine power** has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and power. Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that **through them you may come to share in the divine nature**, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire."

The "talents" that God wants to entrust to us are His divine power, His transforming love, mercy and grace. His power to teach. His power to heal. His power to forgive.

Do we really know that God is offering us these “talents,” these gifts, these aspects of His own life? And are we experiencing them in our own lives?

Or, like servant number 3, have we in a sense dug a hole and buried them. Because we’ve got our own agenda. Because our trust in God is too limited. Because we lack imagination. Because no one ever told us that God’s divine life is there for us to share.

Or maybe, because like servant number 3, we don’t really know God.

Servant number 3 doesn’t know His master’s love and generosity. He thinks of Him as demanding and even unethical. He’s not even inspired by the example of the other servants. He’s isolated, lacking in courage and not interested in his own growth as a person.

Servant number 3 is so wrong about the Master. The Master wants to share all that he has with his servants. He wants them to share his joy.

He also wants them to share his responsibilities. At the top of the list of responsibilities is to share the master’s love, his truth and his mercy with others, so that they can know and experience what the servants have known and experienced.

The master wants what he has given and shown the servants to be **shared**, to be **gathered and harvested** by them on his behalf.

The master’s plan for humanity is captured very beautifully in the very first section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

CCC 1: God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness, **freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life.** For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus **heirs of his blessed life.**

God’s purpose is not to provide information. It’s to make available transformation, to change our lives so that we are experiencing His love, grace and power.

Then once we experience God’s own life and make it our own, we are to share what we have experienced with others. We don’t dig a hole and bury it.

Our faith is not supposed to be private. It's supposed to be fruitful, to spread to others. As Jesus commanded each of us, go and make disciples.

We are to let Jesus transform us, so that we can transform others.

How do we do this?

We have to rely on the Holy Spirit.

As Saint Paul wrote in his Letter to the Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 5: "The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

If we love God, it's because the Holy Spirit has orchestrated the events of our lives to know God and experience His love.

The same Holy Spirit guides us, prompts us, to share what we have experienced with others.

When does the Holy Spirit do this?

Every day. Every moment of every day. And often, even at night.

In every situation we find ourselves, we should be praying, asking the Holy Spirit questions like this:

"Why am I here? Why am I in this place, at this time in my life? If other people are present, why am I in the presence of these particular people? What do You want from me in this place and time? To speak? What should I say? To be silent? If so, give me the patience to refrain from speaking. To act? What does He want me to do?"

When we ask these questions as prayers, we should expect an answer.

Living like this makes every moment of our lives rich with potential, for something to happen that builds up the kingdom of God on earth. It makes every day filled with opportunities to fulfill the reason God put each of us here on earth.

Our basic message for others goes something like this, which we can express in our own words: "Jesus changed my life. And He can change yours, too."