

**LITURGY & LIFE**  
THE EMMAUS JOURNEY

# **Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Cycle A**

A Catholic Update Companion to the Sunday Readings

## **FAITHFUL WITH WHAT GOD ENTRUSTS**

Receive the gift • Reject fearful hiding • Invest in love • Share the Master's joy

## 1: FOR THE HOMILIST/PCL OR OCIA CO-ORD.: CHRIST SPEAKS - WE LISTEN

### Sunday Readings

| Liturgical Color   | Green — Ordinary Time                 |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| First Reading      | Proverbs 31:10–13, 19–20, 30–31       |
| Responsorial Psalm | Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5                 |
| Second Reading     | 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6                 |
| Gospel             | Matthew 25:14–30 (or 25:14–15, 19–21) |

### The Heart of This Sunday's Gospel

#### THE MASTER ENTRUSTS HIS PROPERTY

Jesus describes a master who entrusts his possessions to three servants, each according to ability. Two servants act with courage and return what they received made fruitful. The third buries his talent because fear has distorted his understanding of the master. The parable is not a celebration of financial success. It reveals the responsibility of grace: God entrusts life, faith, time, relationships, abilities, opportunities, and material resources so they may bear fruit in love. The faithful servant does not compare gifts or hide behind fear; the servant acts, serves, risks, and enters the Master's joy.

### The Liturgical Thread

Proverbs praises a person whose reverence for the Lord becomes diligent work, generosity, wisdom, and care for the household and poor. Psalm 128 blesses those who fear the Lord and walk in God's ways. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that believers are children of light who must remain awake and sober. Jesus then teaches that the returning Master seeks not buried security but faithful fruitfulness from what has been entrusted.

#### THE MOVEMENT OF THE READINGS

A life of reverence bears fruit → Work becomes generous service → Children of light remain awake → Entrusted gifts multiply through faithfulness

### Listening With the Heart

#### Listen

Read Matthew 25:14–30 slowly. Notice that the master entrusts rather than micromanages, that each servant receives a different amount, and that the first two act immediately. Listen especially to the third servant's explanation of fear and to the invitation, "Come, share your master's joy."

## Reflect

What has God entrusted to me in this season? Which gift have I compared, minimized, or buried? Where does fear keep me from serving? Whose good might be advanced if I used one gift more courageously?

## Pray

Thank God for every gift you can name and for gifts you have overlooked. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your vocation, purify fear, and show one concrete way to place time, ability, resources, or influence at the service of another person.

## Rest

Rest in the truth that the Master knows what He has entrusted and does not demand another person's portion from you. You are called to fidelity, not comparison. Receive the joy of being trusted by God.

## Carry This Word

MATTHEW 25:21

“Well done, my good and faithful servant... Come, share your master's joy.”

## 2: FOR THE CATECHIST: THE CHURCH TEACHES - WE LEARN

### Catechetical Focus

#### STEWARDSHIP, VOCATION, AND THE COURAGE TO BE FRUITFUL

Everything the disciple possesses is first received: existence, baptismal grace, charisms, intelligence, health, time, money, relationships, work, influence, and the Gospel itself. Christian stewardship asks not, 'What belongs to me alone?' but, 'What has God entrusted to me, and for whom?' Vocation is the personal form of that stewardship. Each baptized person is called to receive gifts gratefully, discern them honestly, develop them responsibly, and spend them in love. Fear can disguise itself as humility or caution, but grace invites prudent courage. Fruitfulness is not measured by comparison, visibility, or worldly achievement; it is measured by faithful love.

### Catholic Update Resources

#### PRIMARY CATHOLIC UPDATE

C0108A | Vocations: How Is God Calling Me?

This Update helps participants recognize vocation as God's personal call within baptism. It broadens discernment beyond ordained or religious life and invites every disciple to ask how gifts, relationships, work, and circumstances can become a faithful response to God. The parable's servants receive different trusts; vocation begins not by comparing portions but by answering the call contained within one's own life.

#### SECONDARY CATHOLIC UPDATE

C1909A | Stewardship: Seeing Lazarus the Beggar in Those We Encounter

This Update grounds stewardship in attention to the person placed before us. Gifts become fruitful when they cross the distance between possession and compassion. Time, money, influence, skill, and prayer are not preserved for private security alone; they are entrusted for communion and service. The resource keeps stewardship from becoming merely an institutional appeal by directing it toward human dignity and concrete neighbor-love.

## The Catechist's Companion

### Key Teaching

Vocation identifies the call. Stewardship places every gift inside that call. Charity reveals whether the gift has truly become fruitful.

## Session Aim

Help participants understand Christian stewardship as the grateful, discerning, courageous, and loving use of everything God entrusts; connect the parable of the talents with baptismal vocation, works of charity, and readiness for the Lord's return.

## Formation Objectives

- Explain the master, servants, talents, delay, accounting, and shared joy in Matthew 25:14–30.
- Describe stewardship as a response to grace rather than ownership or fundraising alone.
- Connect baptismal vocation with personal gifts, circumstances, relationships, and responsibilities.
- Distinguish faithful fruitfulness from comparison, perfectionism, or visible success.
- Choose one entrusted gift and one concrete act through which it will serve another person this week.

## Integrating This Week's Catholic Updates

C0108A provides the vocational question: "How is God calling me through the life and gifts I have received?" C1909A provides the neighbor-centered test: "Whose need is placed before me, and how can what I possess become service?" Together they prevent two distortions. Vocation without stewardship remains abstract, while stewardship without vocation can become obligation without relationship. God calls, entrusts, and sends.

## Expand the Conversation

- Why does the master entrust different amounts to different servants?
- What does the third servant's fear reveal about his image of the master?
- How does Proverbs 31 unite reverence, work, generosity, and praise?
- Which gifts are easily overlooked because they are quiet, ordinary, or hidden?

## Common Misunderstandings

- The parable does not teach that God loves productive people more. Grace is given before the servants act, and the praise is for faithfulness.
- A "talent" in the parable is a large monetary unit, not simply a modern synonym for an ability. The broader application to gifts must remain rooted in entrusted responsibility.
- Stewardship is not limited to parish fundraising. It includes the whole of life and is ordered toward God's glory and the good of others.
- Fear, trauma, illness, poverty, or disability should not be treated as moral laziness. Pastoral application must honor real limitations and hidden forms of fidelity.
- Fruitfulness is not endless activity. Sabbath, prayer, contemplation, and receiving care are also faithful uses of life entrusted by God.

## Church References

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 27; 355–357; 546; 798–801; 871–873; 898–913; 1936–1937; 2001; 2427–2428; 2443–2449. Scripture connections: Genesis 1:26–31; Exodus 35:30–35; Deuteronomy 8:10–18; Matthew 5:14–16; Luke 12:35–48; Luke 16:1–13; Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Peter 4:7–11.

## OCIA Connection

OCIA participants may initially hear "vocation" as a call reserved for priests or religious and "stewardship" as a request for money. This Sunday expands both. Baptism gives every Christian a vocation to holiness and mission, and stewardship names the grateful responsibility to place the whole life under Christ's lordship. Sponsors can help participants identify gifts already present, needs already visible, and one next step of service within the parish and world.

## Catechist's Insight

### PASTORAL CARE

Avoid equating the talents in the parable directly with natural abilities or financial wealth. A talent was a large monetary trust within the story, while the parable's spiritual meaning embraces everything God entrusts. Also avoid praising overwork, perfectionism, or public achievement. Some people serve fruitfully through hidden fidelity, disability, caregiving, endurance, prayer, or quiet presence. The contrast is between faithful responsiveness and fear-driven refusal, not between impressive and unimpressive lives.

Begin with gratitude, not guilt. People discover responsibility more fruitfully when they first recognize that God has trusted them. Invite a broad inventory of gifts: patience, endurance, listening, practical skills, cultural wisdom, prayer, hospitality, financial resources, professional competence, relationships, and availability. Guard against comparison. The question is not, "Why did I receive less?" but, "How can love make what I received fruitful?"

### 3: FOR THE CANDIDATE/CATECHUMEN: THE DISCIPLE RESPONDS - WE LIVE

#### Living the Gospel This Week

- Which gift or responsibility am I most grateful to have received?
- Where have comparison or fear caused me to hide?
- Whose need is already within reach of my time, skill, or attention?
- Does my use of money reflect trust, gratitude, justice, and generosity?
- How might my work or daily responsibilities become an offering to God?
- What would courageous faithfulness look like before the week ends?

#### Choosing to Be an Intentional Disciple

WHAT IS CHRIST ASKING OF ME TODAY?

What has the Master entrusted to me—and how will love make it fruitful?

Intentional discipleship refuses both entitlement and fearful passivity. The disciple receives life as gift, asks how Christ is calling, develops what has been entrusted, remains awake to the needs of others, and acts without waiting for perfect certainty. Fidelity may be public or hidden, dramatic or ordinary. What matters is that grace is not buried and love is allowed to bear fruit.

#### Holy Habit

THE ENTRUSTED-GIFTS EXAMEN

At day's end ask: What did I receive today? Where did I act with gratitude and courage? Where did fear, comparison, comfort, or distraction bury a gift? Who benefited from my time, words, work, prayer, or resources? What one trust should I place into service tomorrow? Conclude: 'Lord Jesus, make me faithful with what You entrust.'

#### Faith Into Practice

- Name five gifts or responsibilities God has entrusted to you.
- Use one skill to help a person or parish ministry without seeking recognition.
- Give a deliberate portion of money, time, or attention to someone in need.
- Ask a trusted person where they see your gifts bearing fruit.
- Take one prudent step toward a vocation or service you have postponed.
- Thank someone whose hidden faithfulness blesses your household or parish.
- End each day by asking, "What did I receive, and how did I return it in love?"

#### Personal Reflection

What am I protecting from risk that God may be asking me to invest in love?

## 4: FOR THE SPONSOR: THE CHURCH SENDS - WE WITNESS

### Sponsor's Path of Accompaniment

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Share Your Faith      | Describe a gift, opportunity, or responsibility that became fruitful only after you risked using it. What helped you move beyond fear or comparison?                                     |
| Walk Together         | Invite the participant to name gifts, experiences, and responsibilities already present in life. Ask which need or person may reveal the next step of vocation.                          |
| Pray Together         | Read Romans 12:3–8 and Matthew 25:19–21. Thank God for different gifts and ask for courage to use them humbly for the good of the Body of Christ.                                        |
| Experience the Church | Meet a parishioner whose vocation is expressed through family life, profession, caregiving, consecrated life, ordained ministry, or hidden service. Listen for how gifts became mission. |
| Continue the Journey  | Each person chooses one entrusted gift, one person or ministry to serve, and one specific action to complete before the next meeting.                                                    |

### Faith at Home

Create a household “gift inventory.” Each person names one gift they see in every other person—not only abilities, but qualities such as patience, courage, humor, compassion, perseverance, or prayer. Then choose one shared gift to place at the service of a neighbor during the week.

### Parish Life

Invite parishioners to connect gifts with mission. Offer a simple ministry discernment process, publish concrete service needs, and recognize hidden forms of stewardship such as caregiving, intercession, mentoring, maintenance, hospitality, and financial generosity. Ensure that ministry invitations respect people’s limits and include formation, support, and gratitude.

### Go Forth This Week

Receive your gifts with gratitude, invest them in love, and let faithful service become the Master’s joy.

### Prayer for the Week

Generous Master, every good gift comes from You. You have entrusted me with life, faith, time, relationships, abilities, resources, and opportunities to love. Free me from comparison, entitlement, and the fear that buries grace. Give me wisdom to discern my vocation, courage to act, humility to serve without recognition, and compassion to notice the person before me. Make my work fruitful, my

generosity joyful, my rest trusting, and my whole life ready for Your return. When You call me to account, may I hear Your invitation to share Your joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Emmaus Insight

The faithful disciple does not preserve grace by burying it, but returns every entrusted gift made fruitful through love.