

**Fear of Receiving Gifts**      Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time      Saturday, September 1, 2018      1 Cor 1:26-31;      **Mt 25:14-30**      BVM      (We do have various responsibilities in life, mostly to share what and who we are with others, to let our gifts work for the benefit and the salvation of all.)

We keep in mind that the parables are wisdom teachings. Now the Book of Proverbs, which is a wisdom teaching, says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” But that fear of the Lord is very different from this fear. That fear of the Lord is a reverential awe that promotes respect and cooperation. **Wisdom is about respect and cooperation with the Creator**, respect for the Creator and the creation and cooperation **with the continuing work of creating**, that the human person, **that the human nature, is called to share in.**

**Now human beings are all different**, and we have different degrees of gifts and giftedness. That is simply the way it is. But we are not put in this world to compete with each other. We are put in this world to compete against ourselves; as is pointed out by St. Ignatius of Loyola, **we are to compete with ourselves.**

Now the first man with the five talents competed with himself and did quite well. He doubled the blessings his master gave him. The second man likewise competed with himself and did just as well. The end result was different, but it was the same proportion. **The third man**, first of all, **rejected a relationship with the master** in the first place. He says, “Here is your talent.” In other words, he didn’t even receive it as a gift; he didn’t take it. He didn’t own it. **He didn’t want it, because the gifts of God are responsibilities**, and there are people that don’t accept the responsibility of being human, of sharing our giftedness with others, **of cooperating with God in the building up of the kingdom.** There are people that don’t want that. This man represents them.

Now he says he did this out of fear, but this is not the reverential fear that is the beginning of wisdom. This is a fear without any wisdom. **This is a fear that does not want to cooperate with God**, so it buries its giftedness in the ground and returns it undeveloped, disowned from the beginning. And yet at the same time there is this confession: “Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where do did not scatter.” And in spite of that there is no investment; **there’s no attempt to please the God who is the source of everything.**

So this parable Jesus tells so that we will realize that **we do have various responsibilities in life, mostly to share what and who we are with others, to let our gifts work for the benefit and the salvation of all.**