

THE UPPER ALDE BENEFICE

The Twelfth Sunday of the Year (Trinity 2)



Pope Benedict XI wanted a chapel decorated. He sent out messengers to discover the best painter in the known world. One of these messengers found Giotto working in his studio surrounded by splendid pictures. 'Will you give me something,' he asked, 'to take to the Holy Father to show him your skill'. The messenger expected a beautifully finished painting, but Giotto picked up a piece of cardboard, and with one sweep of his arm drew an absolutely perfect circle.

The astonished messenger returned with the cardboard and the story. To his surprise the Pope turned from all the magnificent pictures other artists had submitted and said, 'The man who drew this circle shall be the man who will decorate my chapel.'

The Parable of the Talents has to be one of the most well known of all the stories which Jesus told.

"It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one—to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come; share your master's joy.' The one who had received two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come; share your master's joy.' Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.' His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Every one of us possesses some degree of talent, ability and skill. The 'talents' have been entrusted to us by the 'Master'. Some of us have the opportunity to influence public policy and provide for the common good. This very week we have seen the story of the Manchester United footballer Marcus Rashford and his intervention concerning the plight of children who will not have enough to eat during the summer holidays. On the other hand many of us will have the ability to help others understand, affirm and celebrate the humanity we share. Most of the opportunities we have, however, are quiet, ordinary and unseen, perhaps having no discernible effect beyond our immediate families; but we can still bring a measure of hope to others in the sincerity, kindness and joy we bring to the everyday dimensions of life. The challenge of the Gospel is to be ready and willing to respond to the opportunities we have to give joyfully and generously of ourselves for the sake of others.

Prayer for the week

Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen