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Sunday 15 November 2020

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

While the COVID19 restrictions are in place St Philip's is delighted to be celebrating the Eucharist online on [Facebook](#) at 8.00am this morning. It will then be available on either our [YouTube channel](#) or [Facebook](#). All links and details are on our web page www.stphilipsoconnor.org.au



Dear Friends,

What with record low interest rates, volatile share markets, low yielding, high fee superannuation accounts, I think the man who buried his master's talents probably did the right thing! It was the 1st century equivalent of the biscuit tin under the bed! Now is a difficult time to be an investor.

The thrust of the Gospel parable and its challenge to us is really to think about what it is that the master is giving the servants in the story. What are these talents that he gives, what is the money that he hands over to be traded with. The answer surely is that what God gives is relationship. God doesn't give us 'stuff'. He gives us the whole creation to work in and to work with. He gives us one another to live with, but he doesn't just give us stuff. We don't have a series of packages descending from Heaven labelled 'Love from God'. You have something much better which is the love of God: the love that creates relationship with God. The love that makes us different persons; persons of courage, of trust. The love that dissolves the fear and anxiety that lock us up from one another. The talent, the money, the gift given by the master in the story, is relationship with God and transfigured human life. And when you put it like that you realise what an extraordinary thing it is that the third servant in the story is trying to do. "Oh", he says "I've been given a relationship with God - this is so precious and so important and so vulnerable that the best thing I can possibly do with it is nothing. Tell nobody, show nobody, keep it buried. Never mind about relationships with others, never mind about transformed humanity, what I've got is a relationship with God. I'll keep it safely locked up so it doesn't make a difference to anybody else".

These are words of Rowan Williams. What they do is help us understand where this question of stewardship begins. This year was to be the year when we considered stewardship. Having spent

2019 learning about faith, in the context of community, of Church we were to consider in 2020 how we might maintain, be stewards of, this community and Church we had been entrusted with.

We are reminded today that stewardship is much more than money, it is relationship first and foremost. If we can get this right we can create a community that others will be drawn too, and the mission of the Church will continue. What we have to do is invest in each other. I can see our mission for 2021 taking shape!

Blessings to you all *Martin*
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Entrance Antiphon [Introit]

God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:9,11

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:
Everliving God,
before the earth was formed,
and even after it shall cease to be, you are God.
break into our short span of life
and show us those things that are eternal
that we may serve your purpose in all we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Today's Readings

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah (1:7, 12-18)

Be silent before the Lord God!

For the day of the Lord is at hand;
the Lord has prepared a sacrifice,
he has consecrated his guests.

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts,
'The Lord will not do good,
nor will he do harm.'

¹³ Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.

Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

¹⁴ The great day of the Lord is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter,
the warrior cries aloud there.

¹⁵ That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,

a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶ a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.
¹⁷ I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the Lord,
their blood shall be poured out like dust,
and their flesh like dung.
¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the Lord's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Psalm 90:1-8

Lord, you have been our refuge:
from one generation to another.

**Before the mountains were born
or the earth and the world were brought to be:
from eternity to eternity you are God.**

You turn us back into dust:

saying 'Return to dust, O children of Adam.'

**For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday passing:
or like one watch of the night.**

You cut them short like a dream:

like the fresh grass of the morning;

**In the morning it is green and flourishes:
at evening it is withered and dried up.**

And we are consumed by your anger:

because of your indignation we cease to be.

**You have brought our iniquities before you:
and our secret sins to the light of your countenance.**

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians (5:1-11)

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

The Gradual

Alleluia! **Alleluia** Make your home in me, as I make mine in you, says the Lord. **Alleluia!**

John 15:4-5

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (25:41-30)

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

For it 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."

For the Gospel of the Lord,
praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sermon

Prayers of the People

In our prayers we remember those in need, particularly: Roger, Ros, Sam, Ben, Gage, Hugh, Beryl, Denise, Margot, Sarah, Tien and Myrle, those unable to gather with us, those in hospital, residential or home care.

We commend to God the recently departed and those whose year's mind falls at this time William Keal Trivett (15/11/1990) and Stanley Roy Vincent 16/11/2002).

Communion Antiphon

But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have made the Lord God my refuge, and I will tell of all that you have done.

Psalm 73:28

For Reflection

Fr. Schoenstene our veteran Old Testament professor offered the best interpretation I've ever heard of a particularly puzzling parable of the Lord, and I wanted to make sure his reading got a wider audience.

The parable in question is the one concerning the rich man who gives talents to three of his servants and then sets out on a journey [Matt 25:14-30]. Upon his return, he assesses the situation and discovers that the servant to whom he had given five talents had invested them fruitfully and that the servant to whom he had given three talents had done the same. But he finds, to his chagrin, that the slave to whom he had entrusted one talent had simply buried the wealth and had garnered neither gain nor interest. Angered, he orders that the one talent be taken from the timid servant and given to the servant who had invested most boldly. And then comes the devastating moral lesson: "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."

The standard reading of this story—on display in thousands of sermons and reflections—is that the talents symbolize gifts and abilities that God has given to us and that he expects us to “spend” generously or “invest” wisely. This interpretation is supported by the fairly accidental relationship that obtains between “talent” in the ancient Biblical sense of the term and “talent” in ordinary English today. Fr. Schoenstene specified that a talent in ancient times was a measure of something particularly weighty, usually silver or gold. A single talent might represent as much as 50 pounds of precious metal and, as such, was not something that one carried around in one’s pocket. We might make a comparison between a talent and a unit of gold kept at Fort Knox, or an ingot of silver preserved in a safe deposit box.

What the contemporary reader will likely miss, and what the ancient Jewish reader would have caught immediately, is the connection to heaviness: a talent was weighty, and five talents was massively heavy. Heaviness would have brought to mind the heaviest weight of all, which was the *kabod* of Yahweh. That term was rendered in Greek as *doxa* and in Latin as *gloria*, both of which carry the connotation of luminosity, but the basic sense of the Hebrew word is heaviness, *gravitas*.

And this *kabod Yahweh* was to be found in the Jerusalem Temple, resting upon the mercy seat within the Holy of Holies. Therefore, what was heaviest (most glorious) of all was the mercy of God, which abided in infinite, inexhaustible abundance in the Holy Temple.

In light of these clarifications, we can read Jesus’ parable with fresh eyes. The talents given to the three servants are not so much monetary gifts or personal capacities; they are a share in the mercy of God, a participation in

the weightiness of the divine love. But since mercy is always directed to the other, these “talents” are designed to be shared. In point of fact, they will increase precisely in the measure that they are given away.

The problem with the timid servant who buried his talent is not that he was an ineffective venture capitalist but that he fundamentally misunderstood the nature of what he had been given. The divine mercy—received as a pure gift—is meant to be given to others as a pure gift. Buried in the ground, that is to say, hugged tightly to oneself as one’s own possession, such a talent necessarily evanesces. And this is why the master’s seemingly harsh words should not be read as the punishment of an angry God but as an expression of spiritual physics: the divine mercy will grow in you only inasmuch as you give it to others. To “have” the *kabod* Yahweh is precisely not to have it in the ordinary sense of the term.

What comes to mind here is the most famous of all of Jesus’ parables, namely, the story of the Prodigal Son. Using a term that also carried a monetary sense in ancient times, the younger son says, “Father give me my share of the *ousia* (substance or wealth) that is coming to me. Notice how in one sentence, he manages to mention himself three times! The father gives away his *ousia*, for that is all he knows how to do, but the foolish son squanders the money in short order. The spiritual lesson is the same: the divine *ousia* is a gift and it can be “had” only inasmuch as it becomes a gift for others. When we try to cling to it as a possession, it disappears.

How wonderful that these ancient stories, once we unpack their spiritual significance, still sing to us today.

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary RC bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles

News

The ACT Chief Officer regularly updates information regarding interstate COVID19 outbreaks.

Below is the link to the site which outlines areas of risk in Australia

https://health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/Advice%20on%20interstate%20COVID-19%20outbreaks_05112020.pdf [The latest guidance on this site dated 5 November is in the church foyer].

The NSW CHO’s site provides detailed information on the situation in NSW.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates>

Bridging the Gap - Breaking the Cycle

Each week St Philip's donates non-perishable food items to **St John's Care** in Reid. Thank you to those who continue to donate. The baskets at the back of the church are ready to receive your donations! Please refer to the list of suggested items and if you would like to know more about this important outreach visit www.stjohnscare.org.au. As well as food, items such as shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste (especially for children) are needed at this time. Thank you.

This week @ St Philip's

Today *Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost*

8am **Eucharist** - Livestreamed
10am **Eucharist with music**

Saturday 21 November *Feria*

10am – 1pm St Philip's & Pandora's joining the CBR 'Garage Sale Trail'
Book stall
Garage sale items
Pandora's Pre-loved fashions

Volunteers required from 8am to set up and/or help sell. Please see Leighton for further information

Sunday 22 November *Christ the King*

8am **Eucharist** - Livestreamed
10am **Eucharist with Music**

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 28 November 10am – 1pm Festive Fashions @ Pandora's

6pm Advent Dinner – *please see your inbox for email with details and RSVP [link](#)*

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 December 7pm Christmas Concert

Christmas Services – More details soon.

Roster

		15-Nov-20	22-Nov-20	29-Nov-20
Sunday of Month		3rd	4th	5th
Liturgical Season		24th Sunday after Pentecost	Christ the King	First Sunday of Advent
Flowers		Flower team	Flower team	Flower team
8am	Celebrant	Rev'd Canon Scott	Rev'd Martin	Rev'd Martin
	Preacher (if different to Celebrant)			
	Sidespeople & Welcomer	Vicki L & helpers	Tim & Shane	Nirmal F & helpers
	Liturgical Assistant	Lisa C	Peter W	Lisa C
	Bible Reader	Rebecca P	Shane W	volunteer
10am	Celebrant	Rev'd Canon Scott	Rev'd Martin	Rev'd Martin
	Preacher (if different to Celebrant)			
	Sidespeople & Welcomer	Laura W, Richard G & Sally A	Fred A, Janene B & helper	Denise M & helpers
	Liturgical Assistant		Philippa W	Tim G
	Musician(s) & Singers/Soloist	Colin F	Colin F	Colin F
	Bible reader	volunteer	Kerry-Anne C	Pete L

