

Cycle A

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary 157

Reading I: Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

Wisdom is the dominant theme of this first reading as well as the Gospel selected for this Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. Under the light of the Gospel, this passage reinforces the importance of using our time well and profitably and in a manner that results in a readiness for whatever may come. Here, and in other passages, we see **wisdom** personified as a woman. In this particular passage it is a mother extending teachings of **wisdom** to her son who is a king!

Reading 2: I Thessalonians 5: 1-6

Human beings, especially Christians, have been fascinated by the end time issue since the Church's very beginnings. There is mention throughout the scriptures of, "the signs of the times" that speak of the importance of being ready. **Wisdom** calls us to be vigilant about leading virtuous lives and by doing so we need not concern ourselves with "the when" of the end times. Rather, we are called to expend our energies in seeking to live a life of goodness, as the letter of Saint Paul encourages the Thessalonians and us to be *children of the light*.

Gospel: Matthew 25: 14-30

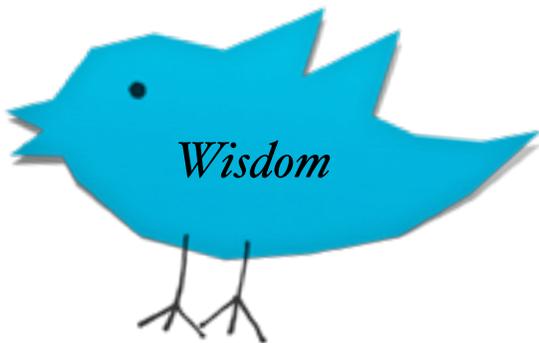
The Gospel encourages us to recognize the gifts God has given us and to use them **wisely**. The servant who buried his talents did so out fear. Time and again Jesus will tell us that *fear is useless, what is needed is trust*. Fear causes much destructive behavior of others and of ourselves. Fear narrows and constrains; it paralyzes any good outcome. **Wisdom** will not allow fear to reign over us. **Wisdom** then is our defense during fearful times. If you take some time to think of some of the greatest leaders in history, you will see that they led in fearful times and allowed **wisdom** to help them to move beyond their fear.



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



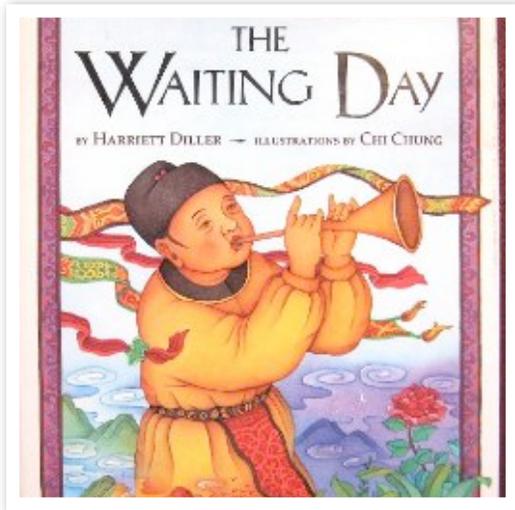
ordinary
time



lectionary
reading



children's story



The Waiting Day

Written by Harriett Diller

Illustrated by Chi Chung

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character
education
activity

The Waiting Day

This original parable set in ancient China follows a harassed ferryman through his day. Waves of increasingly important passengers making escalating demands make for a highly stressful day. In the flurry of all of this, an old beggar sits by the riverside, unperturbed by the comings and goings. The ferryman assumes that the old beggar is waiting around for a free ride and regards him as an annoyance, when in fact the old beggar is simply waiting to experience the sunset. The two characters represent the difference between the flurry of activity with no real meaning and being content with the simplicity and **wisdom** of contemplating and enjoying a sunset.

Activity

Step One: Talk with the students regarding the fact that God gives each person unique gifts and talents. Just like the characters in the gospel, we are supposed to do something with those talents and gifts.

Step Two: Ask the students to make a list of all the talents they believe God has given them and remind them that they may not even have discovered some of them as of yet. Have them number a piece of binder paper down the left side for each gift or talent they wish to list.

Step Three: After they have made this list, have them write how they have used that talent or gift to help others. Remind them that by using their gifts to help others, they are giving honor to God.

**Wisdom is the first and
highest gift of the Holy Spirit.
Wisdom reaches deep into any
truth and reveals its richness.**

Built into WISDOM is the element of love, which inspires, rejoices and directs the mind to judge all things according to their principles.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Choose one talent that God has given you and make a commitment to yourself and to God to use that talent as a prayer. Here are a few examples of how you can do that.

Suppose you take piano lessons. When you sit down to practice or to play at a recital you may begin by dedicating the practice or the recital to God. In this way you are using the talent God has given you to honor God. You can make your practice or recital into a prayer!

You may be an athlete. When entering into a practice, a competition or a game, you can begin by dedicating the event to God and saying to yourself and to God that you would like to use the gifts God has given you to give honor to God. Again a prayer by utilizing the gifts God has given you. It is a way to give your gifts back to God!

Look Feel Know Act

Wisdom is a gift from God. Just as any other gift or present, it must be unwrapped and recognized to be of any use. Saint Paul and many other writers and theologians have spoken of the fact that we are at our best when everyone is recognizing the gifts of others. Many great benefits come from people gathering their gifts and using them for one another. When you recognize the unique gifts you have and how they can be joined with the gifts of others, some wonderfully grand things can happen. **Wisdom** is the gift that compels us to join our gifts with the gifts of others to do something truly good for God and for ourselves.

The Waiting Day becomes a great backdrop for these end time readings as we come close to the end of the liturgical year of the church. The story certainly emphasizes waiting for the close of a day with a friend, such as **Wisdom**. The flurry that the ferryman experiences can parallel the worry of the end times. The beggar, in contrast, is in a reflective mode which allows wisdom to guide him in his waiting for the sunset. **Wisdom** keeps all the frenetic activity from disrupting his patient waiting. This is an excellent story to inform and transform the frantic pace that will come with the secular preparations for Christmas.



closing
tool

Pray that you will always call upon the Holy Spirit that dwells within you to guide you in all things. For the Holy Spirit is the summit and source of all wisdom. Amen.



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