

"Lord, fill us with your light ...that we might share your light with the world."

33rd Sunday In Ordinary Time - Year A

PRV 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31, PS 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 1 THES 5:1-6, MT 25:14-30



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Good evening/morning. In our Gospel today we hear of the talents entrusted to three servants. A talent was a measured weight of gold or silver, having a monetary value of about 6000 denarii. To put that in perspective one denarius was a day's wages for the common laborer. Five talents represented more than 80 years wages. Our present day use of the word, "talent" is less a measure of weight pointing more to the abilities that one might have.

Recently, my wife and I made a trip to Whitefish Point in the Upper Peninsula. Whitefish Point had been home to a Coast Guard installation whose responsibility, beyond water rescue, was to care for the lighthouse and foghorn in place there. The crew's quarters were later converted into a bed and breakfast overlooking Lake Superior. It was there that we stayed for a couple of nights. With each visit to the area, we are amazed to see how the shoreline has changed. When we walked out onto the beach our first afternoon the wind was howling. The weather bureau reported sustained winds of 30 mph and gusting higher. After walking a while, Renata sat down on a log that had washed ashore. I sat down behind her blocking the wind at her back. We have sheltered and cared for each other in our years together. That day was no different.

It was good to sit and watch the wind sculpt the sand into drifts. The sand moved across the beach as a sheet into the lake. So much sand was being moved that the waves literally turned brown. We could see large stones tossed and polished in this wild mix of sand and water. I wondered how long before they would be made smooth and their character revealed. With our shoes, pockets and hair full of sand, we left the beach for the day.

In the dark of the next morning, I suggested that we return to the beach and photograph the sunrise. The morning was clear with few clouds but the high winds continued. We walked out to the tip of shoreline that is the actual Whitefish Point. It is this point that marks the entrance and safety of Whitefish Bay. An underwater shelf protects Whitefish Bay from the worst of Lake Superior storms. When the waves roll in off the lake, they hit this shelf and can leap 15 to 20 feet in the air. We were seeing this in the softness of first light. The wind tore at the top of these waves forming a fine spray and mist. The refraction of the light through the mist created shimmering rainbows that would fade and reappear.

Renata and I watched in quiet awe as the sun lifted above the horizon. The words that came to me were, "Lord, fill us with your light." Now when two become one, it is not uncommon to finish the thoughts and sentence of the other. So, when I said, "Lord, fill us with your light," Renata said softly, "...that we might share your light with the world." That is the crux of today's Gospel. The Divine blessings that we receive; love, mercy and compassion are the talents given in abundance, far beyond the weight of gold or silver. We invest those talents by sharing them with the marginalized of the world. We are called to *watch the back* of the most vulnerable. We are called to protect them from the winds of hunger and loneliness. When we invest our compassion and mercy, our return on investment, is the joy of sharing a love and truth far greater than our own. Somehow, the rainbows and waves that danced so high that morning seemed to know that. *The Kingdom of God is built by those who go beyond themselves in the care of another.* This process of building is as patient and relentless as the waves that polish the stones on the beach.

St. Paul speaks of the times and seasons in response to the Thessalonian's question about the end times. He cautions us to be awake and alert. In God's time, our hearts, like the stones on the beach, will be polished and renewed.

One of my favorite quotes is from the Jesuit, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

“Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”

Today our society is troubled and uneasy over many things. Now is the time to invest our love and compassion. Now is the time to light the second fire.

In the simple gifts of bread and wine, we come to know the Lord. Knowing him here at this table allows us to know him, in our family and in the world.

References

All scripture quotations are taken from;. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

Note: *Whitefish Bay was the safe harbor that the ore freighter, Edmund Fitzgerald was trying to reach during a November storm in 1975. She went down 15 miles short of the bay taking 29 men with her. At Whitefish Point there is a museum run by the Great Lakes Historical Society where the recovered bell of the Edmund Fitzgerald is on display.*