

SUNDAY PLUS

Talented!

God's gift

by Denise Cottrell-Boyce

“Our talents are a gift from God. We shouldn't waste them.” Today's Gospel has a nice simple message – particularly useful for parents around exam time. But a gift is ours to do with as we please, even if it pleases us to abuse or waste it. What the man in the Gospel gives to his servants is not a gift. Jesus says clearly, “he entrusted his property to them”. My daughter's beautiful singing voice is not God's gift to her alone. It is God's gift to the world, through her. Knowing this frees her from the burdens of excessive pride or false modesty. She has the pleasurable responsibility of exercising, protecting and using her voice to bring joy to others.

God entrusts parents, priests and parishioners with the young souls in our Church. God trusts us to work with and for them, nurturing their souls as conscientiously as we do their bodies and brains. He trusts us to open our churches, chaplaincies and homes to embrace these most precious talents, by inviting them to plan and participate in liturgy, to taken on responsibilities in parish work and mission. He trusts us to remember they will be listening to sermons and watching our behaviour. He trusts us to recognise them as valid and essential members of our community. When we look at the young people in our churches, are we patting ourselves on the back



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because they still show their faces on Sunday? Is that all we want of them? Because if it is, then “even that which we have will be taken away from us”.

Use your gifts

by Fr Dominic Robinson SJ

The Lottery. Reams of tickets are sold each week for the big prize draw as people risk investing in the hope of striking it lucky. Life involves taking risks, some great, some small, as we invest what we have to give: our education, our skills, our wealth. In the Gospel this Sunday it is our personal God-given treasure we are invited to trade wisely. We can't expect an immediate payback but, if we use our gifts for the common good, we are promised we will be given still more. It's not a game of chance. Rather, it's a life which, if we stick our neck out and use our talents, will bring us the longer-term consolation of Christian discipleship. There's no immediate reward. It's a challenge to respond to an immediate and urgent need: to use our gifts not for ourselves but

for the community as a whole. How are we going to share our treasure this week? Dare we risk it?

Fr Dominic Robinson SJ teaches dogmatic and pastoral theology at Heythrop.

“**The Lord does not give the same things to everyone in the same way: he knows us personally and entrusts us with what is right for us; but in everyone, in all, there is something equal: the same, immense trust. God trusts us, God has hope in us! And this is the same for everyone.**

Pope Francis

My gift

by Fr Eddie McGhee

Olympic gold, Premiership champions, world number one: achievements like this seem to be beyond mere mortals. We may admire, we may even aspire to such greatness, but for the vast majority, these heights seem unattainable. These are the standards that the world sets. These are the standards of human “kingdoms”. What about the standards of God's kingdom? They are simple and are achievable by mere mortals. They do require effort, not superhuman effort but ordinary human effort. In God's kingdom we are challenged to recognise our own potential. Having recognised our potential we need to work towards fulfilling it. In God's kingdom we are called only to be the best we can be. We are not all the same. Each one of us is unique. My contribution can't be made by

anyone else. The wholeness of God's kingdom is dependent on each one of us achieving his or her potential.

Lord, give us the courage to let go of our fears and to use our gifts unselfishly for the building of your kingdom. Amen.

Fr Eddie McGhee is the Catholic chaplain at a Scottish prison and the author of Faith Inside: a guide for Catholics in prison, available from Redemptorist Publications: www.rpbooks.co.uk.

Lord, heal the wounds of sin and division which shatter lives and relationships. Bring peace to our world. Give eternal rest to all who have died and comfort to their families. Amen.

Today: Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31
1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Matthew 25:14-30

Monday: 1 Maccabees 1:10-15, 41-43.
54-57, 62-64
Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday: 2 Maccabees 6:18-31
Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday: 2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31
Luke 19:11-28

Thursday: 1 Maccabees 2:15-29
Luke 19:41-44

Friday: 1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59
Luke 19:45-48

Saturday: 1 Maccabees 6:1-13
Luke 20:27-40

Next Sunday: Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28
Matthew 25:31-46