The 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A – 11/15/2026 – Msgr. Peter Quang Nguyen

First Reading – **Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31:** A good wife is invaluable, trusted by her husband and doing good all her life. She's hardworking and charitable, deserving of praise especially for her fear of the LORD.

Responsorial Psalm – **Psalm 128:** Those who fear the LORD and walk in His ways are blessed. They enjoy fruitful labor, a prosperous family, and lifelong blessings from God.

Second Reading – **1 Thessalonians 5:1-6:** The day of the Lord will arrive unexpectedly. While others may be caught off guard, believers are children of light and should stay alert and sober.

Gospel – **Matthew 25:14-30:** A man going on a journey entrusts his servants with different amounts of money. Two servants invest and double their money, receiving praise and more responsibility from their master upon his return. The third servant hides his money and is chastised for his inaction, losing even what he had.

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

There is a vast difference between staying safe and remaining vigilant.

When God created us, He bestowed upon us gifts according to our individual capacities, along with health, time, and talents, so that we might put them to work for Him. Whether one receives five talents, two, or one, it is in proportion to the capacity the Master has entrusted to them. What the Master desires is a return on His investment—not for His wealth to be buried and kept idle until His return. In the same way, God has granted us the gift of faith through the Church; we are called to nurture and grow this faith by practicing Christian charity, rather than using the excuse that "faith is a private, internal matter" to justify doing nothing at all.

Those who received five talents and two talents each doubled what they were given—representing those who use God's grace to perfect themselves and contribute to the well-being of others, the community, the parish, and the Church. The one who received a single talent chose to bury it; this signifies someone who, despite bearing the seal of Baptism, fails to live out their faith—allowing the seed of faith to remain buried, bearing no fruit for their spiritual life.

In today's Gospel, we encounter one of Jesus' most challenging parables: the Parable of the Talents. A master, preparing to go on a journey, entrusts a vast sum of wealth to his servants. He gives five talents to the first, two to the second, and one to the third—each according to his own ability. The first two servants immediately set to work, using the funds to engage in activity that doubles what they had originally received.

Then, we come to the third servant. He took his single talent of silver, dug a hole in the ground, and buried it. When the master returned, the servant showed no remorse; in fact, he seemed proud of his own caution. He said, "Master, I know you are a demanding man... out of fear, I went and buried your talent in the ground. Here, I am returning it to you."

Take note of what caused the third servant to fail. He did not squander the money on a dissolute lifestyle, nor did he lose it in a failed business venture. His sin was, in essence, paralysis. Driven by fear—and a distorted

view of his master as a harsh tyrant—he chose to preserve rather than invest. He opted for a "safe" way of life. And Jesus shows us that choosing a "safe" existence when it comes to the gifts of God is a tragedy.

In the ancient world, a "talent" (a unit of currency) represented a vast sum of money—equivalent to the wages a person might earn over the course of twenty years. In the spiritual life, a "talent" encompasses everything God has entrusted to us: our time, our faith, our capacity for forgiveness, our material possessions, and even our own unique personalities. None of these truly belong to us; we are merely stewards, not owners. God bestows these gifts upon us—not so that we might carefully hoard them and return them intact at the end of our lives, but so that we might put them to use, allowing them to bear fruit in this world.

In this context, the first reading—taken from the Book of Proverbs—offers a concrete image of what a life lived with "five talents" might look like. We encounter the celebrated praise of a "virtuous woman"—a person of great strength and profound worth. It is worth noting that a person's value is not measured by how effectively they withdraw from the challenges of the world. Rather, a person of true worth is one who lives an active, creative, and deeply engaged life. They work with hands guided by love, caring for their families; and, most importantly, they "reach out to the poor and extend their hands to the needy." They employ the gifts God has given them to directly foster the well-being of others. As the Responsorial Psalm reminds us, such a faithful and proactive way of life brings true blessings and peace. Why is this perspective so significant? Saint Paul provides the answer in the Second Reading, taken from his letter to the Thessalonians. He reminds us that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. Therefore, he advises: *"Let us not sleep as others do, but rather let us stay alert and live with sobriety."*

Often, when we hear about "staying alert" in anticipation of Christ's return, we might imagine someone anxiously staring out a window, waiting for the heavens to open. Yet, Saint Paul calls us "children of the light." Staying alert does not mean hiding in a bunker out of fear; rather, it means living fully within the light of God's grace in the present moment—rolling up our sleeves to carry out the work of love while we still have the time.

As we approach the end of the liturgical year, today's readings invite us to conduct a spiritual examination: What have we buried out of fear? Perhaps we have buried our capacity to forgive, fearing that we might be hurt again. Perhaps we have chosen silence in the face of injustice, fearing conflict. Or perhaps we have buried our very faith, keeping it as a strictly private matter for fear of being judged by others.

God is not a harsh tyrant lurking about, waiting to catch us in a fault. He is a generous God—a God who loves us so much that He trusts us enough to entrust His own life and mission into our hands. When we courageously step forward in faith—when we dare to love, forgive, and serve the poor—we come to realize that God's grace always multiplies whatever we offer.

Today, let us pray for the courage to bring forth whatever we may have kept hidden in the shadows. May we be able to bring our gifts into the light and share them generously with those around us, so that one day, we may hear the words we all long to hear: "Well done! Good and faithful servant... Come and share your master's joy."

Lord Jesus, You have granted us the gift of faith and the privilege of being children of God. Help us to use the abilities and time You have entrusted to us to nurture our faith through a virtuous daily life, so that when You return, we may be found worthy of the reward of eternal life. Amen.