

STAYING ON THE JOB: 33RD SUNDAY A

Brian Gleeson CP

You and I are busy people. We rush here and we rush there. We do this and we do that. All kinds of activities occupy our attention. There is work. There is shopping. There is cooking. There is gardening. There is painting and decorating. There is study. There are children to bath and feed. There are others to mind and entertain. There are friends and neighbours to visit and help. And when we come to the end of a typical day, there may hardly be enough time left to write a letter or an e-mail, glance at the newspaper, watch the news, or speak to God in prayer.

The amazing thing is that our list of things to do never runs out. Being so permanently busy means that we find it hard to take the Word of God as seriously as we should! At this time of the church year, the teaching in particular that the world as we know it is definitely coming to an end! This is sure and certain, St Paul insists. It will happen when people least expect it, he also insists. The suddenness of the end of the world and of the Second Coming of Christ will be like a thief suddenly breaking into a house at night or like an expectant mother who suddenly goes into labour.

Jesus teaches that we while we wait for his return to earth at the end of time, we make the best possible use of all those gifts that have been given us for the love and service of God, for the benefit of other people, and to make the world a better place.

That's the point of the story he told about the three employees who were each entrusted with a huge sum of money, while their employer went away for an indefinite time. Two out of the three invested it wisely and well, doubling their employer's money. The other hid his allocation in the ground and therefore did nothing. So when the boss returned and called all three to account, the industrious ones received fitting rewards for their work. But the one who was too afraid to take the risks of the market place, found himself on the outer and thoroughly unhappy for simply *'playing it safe'*.

So let's make the most of our opportunities. Let's take a chance and visit that grumpy relative; figure out a way to feed the hungry and house the homeless; take our concerns about personal safety to that public meeting; become a

reader in church; sit with a dying friend. The list of our opportunities to do good and to do it now is simply endless.

Several Readings around this time are a reminder that the delay in the final coming of Christ requires us to be vigilant, to be on the look-out for Our Lord's return. Today Jesus is reminding us to be on the job, to be active, industrious and diligent in carrying out our duties and responsibilities in life, and to be active, industrious and diligent in working for the coming of the kingdom of God on earth. After all, to be a Christian is to be a missionary, a missionary of God's love. In short, the moral of the gospel today is to do something positive, constructive, and life-giving with whatever gifts God has given us.

So, for the strength we need to make the most of every opportunity, and to be everything we can be day after day, let us pray to Christ in our Holy Communion today! For both ourselves and the people around us, who just like us, have also been gifted by God for the love and service of other people!

bgleesoncp@gmail.com