

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

**33rd Sunday**  
**in Ordinary Time, A**  
**November 15, 2020**

**Fort Yuma, California | P. O. Box 1176, Winterhaven, CA 92283**

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**Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa  
Pastor**

**Our Sunday Masses are held outdoors, for the time being, in the PARKING AREA,  
by the Parish Hall, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 9:30 AM.**

**Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing** (6 feet between people of different households) before, during, and after the Mass. Holy Communion is to be given only after the Final Blessing, in the hand.

## **1st Reading:**

**Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31**

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and works with loving hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a reward for her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

*The Word of the Lord.*

## **Responsorial Psalm:**

**Response: Blessed are those who fear the Lord.**

Blessed are you who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways! For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; blessed shall you be, and favored.

**R.**

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your home; your children like olive plants around your table.

**R.**

Behold, thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord. The Lord bless you from Zion: may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. **R.**

## **2nd Reading:**

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-6**

Concerning times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night. When people are saying, 'Peace and security,' then sudden disaster comes upon them, like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert and sober.

*The Word of the Lord.*

## **R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Remain in me as I remain in you, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me bears much fruit.

## **R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

## **Gospel:**

**Matthew 25:14-15, 19-21**

Jesus told his disciples this parable: "A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one

he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one — to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## **Prayer of the Faithful**

**Celebrant:** As children of the light, we look to God for our every need.

## **Our response:**

**Lord, make us your faithful servants.**

## **Lector:**

1) For the Church: may we be aware of the gifts of faith, time and opportunity that God has entrusted to us, be good stewards of these gifts and diligently utilize them for the glory of God, we pray: **(R)**

2) That our world and local civic leaders work for the common good and not

for personal gain, we pray: **(R)**

3) For an end to the threat of the COVID-19 crisis and for all who are working on the cure, we pray: **(R)**

4) That all victims of natural disasters may recover from their trials with compassion for those who suffer and with determination to forge a better life, we pray: **(R)**

5) For people who are filled with hate and fear, that they might slowly be opened to the freedom and joy of faith, we pray: **(R)**

6) For those who are frustrated in the use of their gifts and talents and are seeking a way to serve more effectively; and for those whose lives are a gift of service to others, we pray: **(R)**

7) We remember those who are sick or in pain; for all those for whom we have promised to pray (*pause for silent prayer*), we pray: **(R)**  
**Celebrant:** O Lord of light, you bless us with many gifts and talents. Teach us to use them to do your will, through Christ our Lord.

## *Please Continue to Pray*

*for God's blessing of good health on*

**John and Gail Inman,  
Michael Gordon,  
Norm Weingart,  
Vivian Rodriguez.**

## **The Mystery of Faith Acclamation**

When we eat this Bread,  
and drink this Cup,  
we proclaim your Death,  
O Lord, until you come  
again.

## REFLECTING ON THE WORD . . . . GUIDEPOSTS

### FACING THE *PAROUSIA*

As we enter the last two Sundays of Ordinary Time, the scripture readings continue to turn our attention to the end times. The second reading of today focuses on when the end (*parousia*) will come while the first reading and the gospel show us how to be prepared for that day.

Paul had explained that the Christians who had died would not miss the *Parousia*. Rather, they would rise first and then both (risen Christians and those who are alive) together would meet the Lord and be with him for all eternity.

In today's second reading Paul explains to the Thesalonians that nobody knows when "the day of the Lord (*Parousia*)" will come. Only one thing is certain: it will come suddenly, like a thief at night. The conclusion is obvious: Let us not be asleep but awake and sober so that the *Parousia* does not take us by surprise. Since we are children of the day since baptism, we must live accordingly and not live as children of the darkness. Then we will never be surprised.

How to live as children of the light? What does the truly ideal person look like? What are our responses to the challenges of life? For answers, let us go to the first reading and gospel of today as together they provide examples of our responsibility to live up to our calling. Our first reading introduces us to a woman of extraordinary skills, who uses her gifts both at home and out in the world, where she reaches out her hands to the poor. When we listen to the Gospel that follows, we can more easily visualize how God expects us to use the talents we have been given, not just to enrich ourselves or our employers, but to make the world a better place.

### THE CHALLENGE TO PROGRESS IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

The readings in the last weeks of Ordinary Time always speak of end times in order to inspire us to put our affairs in order, to let go of the negative in our past and embrace a new and blessed life.

No one is perfect. We make mistakes or the wrong call often as we journey through life. Hopefully, we learn from those mistakes. Those life lessons can make us better people.

Deep down in our hearts, all of us yearn to be the ideal person. The beautiful poem we heard from the first reading, can be a source of inspiration. What gets in the way of that ideal? Well, life does; our own ego does; all the distractions we face every day can. Where can we turn, to whom can we turn?

The word of God is always fresh, taking on new and pristine meanings. The meanings we received from Scripture last year may very well tell us something else this year. That is how the divine word works in our lives. The Holy Spirit tries to renew and refresh us every day. To progress in spiritual life is a constant challenge.

### THE PARABLE OF THE FIVE TALENTS

The Gospel parable is about an investment of money that the servants do not own. God's gifts are intended to multiply for the sake of others. We dam up God's gifts when we understand them as intended only for us.

Pope Francis has warned seminarians that the call to priesthood is not about personal fulfillment. Vocations need to be judged on whether a future priest is good for the people of God.

In marriage, ideally, spouses are sent for the salvation of the other spouse, becoming a sign of God's fidelity and compassion.

In the same vein we ask ourselves: Is Mass really for you and me? The word *Mass* comes from *missa*, which implies being sent for a task. Can we be so deceived as to think we're here for ourselves--and not for God who has a plan for us to accomplish outside?

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In the parable of the talents, Jesus teaches all his followers that those who build on their baptismal commitment with a steady and enthusiastic growth in virtue and apostolic zeal will be rewarded. Those who do nothing but bury their gifts for safekeeping will lose whatever they have saved. The master's response to the servant says it all: "His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?'"

In this parable, to prove his point, the master [Jesus] took the one talent and gave it to the servant who gained the most. This parable is like a story told religion students as follows:

*At baptism your guardian angel receives a barrelful of your gifts. As this angel follows you through life, the angel holds out to you a gift to share with someone who needs it to get into heaven. When we meet Jesus on the Last Day, he looks to see if the barrel is empty. If it is, it is because you were kind enough to share. Jesus ushers you through the pearly gates. If not, you have to wait outside and empty your barrel to the long line of the needy who still come. It is then you get another chance.*

### WE GET OUT OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE WHAT WE PUT INTO IT.

If we work hard, we will be more likely to succeed in life than if we don't! Outside circumstances (which we call luck: good or bad) can affect our efforts, but for the most part we get out of life what

we put into it. That's a no-brainer.

Jesus in today's parable is telling us that our happiness works the same way. We will get out of our spiritual life what we put into it.

Too many people today hear only what they want to hear in the gospel. They enjoy hearing about God's mercy and love, but they tend to ignore the places where Jesus tells us about our responsibilities. Today's parable tells us that heaven is not a freebie and it's not automatic. If it were, why did Jesus need to come to us in the first place? Why did he teach us how to live and stress the importance of prayer and doing good works?

Grace is indeed a gift, but if we don't use the graces and gifts and love God offers us, we will lose them. It's just like any talent we can think of—if we don't use it, it does us no good to have it. God can't save us without our cooperation. If his parable doesn't tell us that, it doesn't tell us anything.

### **DON'T BURY YOUR FAITH. INVEST IT.**

The parable of the talents teaches us that the joy of the Lord, as well as our own joy, consists in a Christian life based on grace, courage, and concern for others rather than on formality, self-protection, and fear.

Pope Francis speaks frequently of this kind of faith. He encourages all of us to live our faith and not to bury it. In one of his homilies Pope Francis says, "All the goods that we have received are to be given to others, and thus they increase, as if he were to tell us, "Here is my mercy, my tenderness, my forgiveness, take them and make ample use of them."

It is good for us to ask how we are sharing what God has given us or has blessed us with. For example, if we receive the Lord's forgiveness for our sins and shortcomings, that experience becomes complete only when we are able to forgive those who have offended us.

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### **Our Post-Pandemic Schedule:**

Please don't forget that, God willing, when the threat of Covid-19 is gone, when the situation is stabilized or back to normal, when we will be given the go-ahead to use our Church as before, the Schedule that we will immediately follow will be as follows:

#### **Sunday Masses (We follow Arizona Time):**

Saturday 4:30 PM | Sunday 9:30 AM

#### **Holy Hour/Private Adoration before the Exposed Blessed Sacrament:**

Saturday 3:15 PM to 4:15 PM

Sunday 8:15 AM to 9:15 AM

#### **Confessions:**

Saturday 3:45 PM to 4:15 PM

Sunday 8:45 AM to 9:15 AM

**For Baptism & Marriage Requirements, please visit our website.**

**Note:** Our Church is CLOSED on weekdays. Tourists and sightseers may visit our Church when it is open on Saturday afternoons and/or Sunday mornings, as long as they observe proper visiting manners.

### **LECTORS AND MINISTERS OF COMMUNION**

#### **Requirements:**

First of all, the Lector or Minister of Holy Communion must be a practicing Catholic, that is to say, among other things, that the person is living a life in good standing with the Catholic Church, regularly attends Sunday Mass, and is able to receive Holy Communion.

Moreover,

The **Lector** is expected to come to Mass prepared, that is to say, has read all the readings prior and meditated on them. This is the reason we now assign as much as possible three lectors for a Mass so that in the event that only one or two of the assigned lectors are present, the one present will cover for the others. If all three are present, **Lector 1** proclaims the first reading and responsorial psalm; **Lector 2** proclaims the second reading and alleluia; **Lector 3** leads the Prayer of the Faithful. The two **Ministers of Communion's** spiritual preparation is their personal encounter with the Risen Lord at the Holy Hour immediately preceding the Mass. One of them will expose the Blessed Sacrament at the beginning of the Holy Hour and the other will repose it at the end of the Holy Hour.

We invite those who meet the above qualifications to commit to our pool of lectors and/or extraordinary ministers of Communion, not as a condition for parish membership but as an expression of growth or progress in spiritual life, of intimacy with God. Thus, it is not to be seen as a ministry for the sake of the pastor or the parish but solely for the greater honor and glory of God.

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