



## Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Sunday 19th November 2017 – Day of Prayer for the Poor

In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:

For prisoners and their families

Keynote: Fidelity and service – signs of the covenant with God

### Book of Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

This text is sometimes called the ‘Acrostic Poem of the Good Wife’. Each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The image of Wisdom as an exalted didactic figure, in the earlier chapters of the book, is in contrast here with the wife presented as an everyday, practical domestic counterpart. Our present-day understanding of the role of women may differ, but ‘the perfect wife’ represents Wisdom finally settled in her house tending to the needs of those who have answered the invitation to know more of the ways of God. For those still searching: *‘A perfect wife – who can find her? She is far beyond the price of pearls... always busy with wool and with flax, she does her work with eager hands... she holds out her hands to poor, she opens her arms to the needy... the woman who is wise is the one to praise.’* Practical fidelity in our relationships to even the smallest things of life may be true Wisdom, the thing of great value.

**Responsorial Psalm 127 [128]** – A pilgrimage song – the blessings of home

### First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 5:1-6

The apostle speaks of the Day of the Lord Jesus, the day we all know must come. *‘It is just when people are saying “how quiet and peaceful it is” that the worst happens, as suddenly as labour pains come on a pregnant woman, and there will be no way for anybody to evade it.’* But Paul would not have us be fearful, *‘It is not as if you live in the dark, for the Day to overtake you like a thief. No you are sons (children) of light and sons (children) of day: we do not belong to night or to darkness ...so we should stay awake and sober.’* A Christian deep down knows that God is faithful to the promise, knows and understands that in the Lord, we have hope and the light to guide our path. We must behave as children of the light for we may not evade our responsibility when the time for the Day of the Lord comes.

### Gospel according to Matthew 25:14-30

Still writing about the *Parousia* – the last things – Matthew gives us the Parable of the Talents – a many-sided story with a didactic purpose. It may suggest to us a life style to be adopted while we await the return of the Master. The parable urges us to be faithful in the small things; and careful with goods and talents – whether we have five, two or just one talent – given us for God’s service. A quite different interpretation might suggest that those who bury the gift – the teaching of Jesus – those who refuse to allow the seed of faith to grow and develop, who put limits on faith and service in the community, such are to be condemned. *‘I went off and hid your talent in the ground,’* said the servant with one talent. This servant is condemned. *‘You wicked and lazy servant... take the talent from him and give it to the one who has five talents... as for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him out into the dark.’* If we don’t wish to share that fate we must take action now and make good use of the talent given us!

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