

# 33<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA  
Rev. Jeff McGowan

**1<sup>ST</sup> READING: PROVERBS 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31**

Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

**PSALM 128**

Blessed are those that fear the Lord.

**2<sup>ND</sup> READING: 1<sup>ST</sup> THESSALONIANS 5:1-6**

When people are saying: "Peace and Security," then suddenly disaster comes upon them, like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, they will not escape.

**GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25: 14-30**

His master said, "Well done, my good and faithful servant...Come and share your master's joy."

+++++

What will our Creator and giver of life say when we approach those "pearly gates?" I pray we all hear those most essential of all affirmations: "Well done, good and faithful servant; come and share your master's joy."

But it won't just happen. Clearly, Jesus, God's Word enfleshed, does not want us to play it safe, to bury our talents like those who live in fear. So many are afraid of losing the pitiful lives they are living that they have no hope. They are the ones burying their talents; hoarding their money. It's my life, I can do what I want, but there will be consequences. We can wrap our money in aluminum foil and stash it in the freezer and it might be safe but it won't make anyone more secure. Jesus is saying, "Not those who say 'Lord, Lord,' but those doing the Father's will" who will gain heaven. It is all a matter of faith. Faith is a way of life, a way of being. Faith is life lived on the edge, not in comfort. Faith *insists* upon hope of gain conquering fear of loss.

Every place I look in this church, I see talented, spectacular human beings. Oh, we have been blessed my friends, so very blessed. We know that; but is that what we are feeling? Have we been counting our blessings or counting our losses over the past few months? Wow! What a few months this has been! We have been on an emotional roller coaster. Are we confident or anxious about our lives? Are we placing our trust in the nattering nabobs of negativity or Jesus

Christ? Jesus tells us that our faith will save us; I'd like to suggest, in a very practical way, that faith *insists* that hope of gain conquer fear of loss.

Life is full of surprises, miracles, disappointments, tragedies, successes. We cannot control the things that happen to us but we can control what we let them do to us. We can count our blessings instead of counting our burdens. Until we start counting our blessings, we have no reason to give thanks. When we think about how God has blessed us, pulled us through so many situations, how the decisions we made after prayerful reflection are the best, we have so much to be grateful for. The Body of Christ has hope not fear. Unless...

unless there is no faith or unless the faith is not strong enough to conquer fear; unless we are not grateful or our gratitude is not sincere. I admit, I am juiced about life. I start every day thanking God for my life, for myself, for those I love and those who love me, for where and how I live and as I visualize the day ahead, I visualize the people who I will share this adventure with.

This is my annual appeal for all of our parishioners to fill out our Stewardship commitment cards and make an estimate of the offering you will give the Lord through Queen of Peace Catholic Community. I believe it comes down to putting your faith to the test. It is not a question about what you think is going to happen in the stock market or even in your own job; it is about faith in God and in yourself to put God's talents which you have been given to work or burying them for false security. It is about fear of loss or hope of gain. It is about gratitude for all that has been and all that is and all that is to come. If it's too much to ask for a dollar amount, please just record a percentage and each week or month figure it out as it comes. The message you give yourself is the message that will make or break your day, your week, your year. What does the Body of Christ want to do? Is this the agony in the garden? Is it too much to ask? Please, just relax, settle down and open yourself as we share this meditation...