

**Readings Proverbs 31: 10-13, 19-20, 30-31; Thessalonians 1 5: 1-6; Matthew 25:14-30**



**Fr Michael says:**

### **The Responsibility of Talent**

Society today tends to judge people by what they have done and achieved in life: we have the cult of the celebrities: they are our models; people flock to see and adore their very presence. Our Readings today urge us to step back from this approach and look afresh at who we are and what we have made of ourselves, personally, how we are seen and appreciated by those who are around us, what we offer and share with them of ourselves and who we are. It is in this perspective that Proverbs puts before us a hardworking and virtuous woman, who does not have any of the attractions that we would tend to look for: she is who she is and she is happy with that! Paul is still convinced that the end of time is near, hence this constant call to be ready and awake. Jesus paints for us the best way of awaiting the coming of the Lord.

How do we discover what we are good at and have the talent to fulfil it? Usually we do this with and through others: teachers, friends etc. It is they who tend to be the most talented of all! Dostoevsky was 20 when he wrote his first book: "Poor Folk" and a critic wrote to him: "You have brought a terrible truth to our attention. You have a great gift. Take good care of this gift and then you will become a great worker." Later Dostoevsky said that that was the happiest day of his life! He was vulnerable at the time and needed affirmation and it launched him, as it can us!

We also need to step back on a regular basis to take off the various faces that we have to wear in our different roles in life, to allow the real "me" to surface. Many people do not do this and from that stems a lot of other troubles and issues. We need to recall the eternal energy that never leaves us; it sleeps, neglected, whilst we strain away at our driven routines. This is an important step in life as we journey towards retirement: this is a sacramental moment, John O'Donoghue says, it can help make of our lives a Eucharist, we are the priests who gather, transform and celebrate it: it is our "THANKSGIVING" for who we are truly and what we have become through the many graces we have won through our gifts: the more we give the more we receive. Work at it regularly NOW! Our declining years should not be ones of regret for unachieved dreams, songs or stories.

We all have a need to express ourselves, to fulfil or realise ourselves, otherwise we are frustrated. We want to become whole – or holy!! We rarely achieve our full potential. We can be challenged in expressing ourselves: so we need to live our lives to the full, our talents helping us, working carefully and patiently to achieve fulfilment, as the first two servants showed in the parable. The third servant shows us the opposite, it is not the harshness of the master which matters, or lack of opportunity – it is only himself he can blame, because of laziness, cowardice and selfishness. Life is God's gift to us; what we do with it is our gift to God!