

-Week 9-

The Call of our Talents: Sharing My Personal Gifts with Others

Young people...

show a willingness and readiness to participate and commit themselves to concrete activities in which the personal contribution of each might be an occasion for recognizing one's own identity."

**The Synod of Bishops'
"Young People, the Faith & Vocational Discernment"
Preparatory Document**

#SERVEANDDISCERN

-Week 9-

The Call of our Talents: Sharing My Personal Gifts with Others

Last week, we explored “Persons of Reference: Faith Role Models in the Church,” which invited us to reflect on persons in our lives—role models, mentors, and peers—who inspire, guide, and support of faith journeys. Continuing into this ninth week of our Benedictine Volunteers 20-weeks Vocational Discernment Series inspired by the Synod of Bishops’ “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment” Preparatory Document, we explore “The Call of our Talents: Sharing my Personal Gifts with Others.” What are we called to do with the talents God gives us? How can sharing our gifts with others further our sense of calling and help us grow in our relationship with God?

Matthew 25: 14-30 illustrates a beautiful metaphor of talents as things and abilities we have been given in service to others. Matthew paints a picture of a wealthy master who gives three of his servants talents—5, 2, and 1 talent respectively. The first and second servants given 5 and 2 talents double what they have been given and the third servant given 1 talent buries what he has been given in the ground. With the servants who utilize their talents, the master is pleased and with the third servant who is too fearful to utilize his talents, the master admonishes him. The relationship between master and servant can be a metaphor for our relationship with God, who gifts each of us with unique talents and asks that we utilize them in the concreteness of our daily lives.

We can see through the parable of the talents that God does not discriminate among talents. Regardless the number of talents each servant is given, God does not ask for a specific amount back in return. God simply asks that they use their talents. Like the three servants, each of us are given different talent—both in quantity and quality. God does not ask that we multiply our talents out of pride or arrogance, but rather, that we utilize the gifts He has given us out of love and authentic desire. When we give to others out of love and authentic desire, we act from a space of abundance and openness. In doing so, we are not personally attached to our gifts, but rather, choose to live out in generous service to them. Conversely, when we choose fear like the third servant who buries his talent, we can become so bounded to fear of failure that it paralyzes us to act at all.

To share our talents with others means being a good steward of the gifts God has given to us. We have a personal responsibility to cultivate our gifts by sharing them with others. In return, these talents ‘multiply’ by helping us further develop and refine our gifts. The contribution of our talents reflects back to us important information about who we are, who we are called to be, and where the world needs our abilities. By sharing our personal gifts with others through the unique things and abilities God has given us, we receive His intimate invitation to, “Come, share your master’s joy” (Mt 25: 21).

Questions for Reflection:

- Spend some time prayerfully with Matthew 25: 14-30. It may also be helpful to visit with Luke 19: 11-27. When in your life have you chosen to ‘multiply’ your talents like the first and second servants and when have you chosen to ‘hide’ your talent like the third servant?
- What are the talents (i.e. possessions, gifts, abilities) God has given you? In what ways have these talents contributed to the greater good?
- Through these contributions, how has sharing your gifts with others helped you recognize/affirm/discover your identity in God?