

**11/16/14 ..... 33 A**

-- Any of you who have investments in the stock market, including mutual funds and retirement accounts which include those type of investments, know you take on some risk.

-- Today we hear a parable about risk. At first glance it seems to be about taking an investment risk with money, money that is not theirs but it entrusted to these servants.

-- It's not given out equally, but even the servant given one talent was given a great sum of money. A talent was equivalent to about 6,000 days wages for a worker. Translated in today's terms, that would be hundreds of thousands of dollars.

-- Two of the servants invested their money; the third buried it. The master may seem harsh on that third man. After all, he was playing it safe. The master almost seems like a ruthless Wall Street mogul.

-- But this parable, as Jesus tells it, is not primarily about money. It's about the gifts God has given us freely. Like those servants we did not earn God's love and the "talents" he's given us. They were free gifts.

-- That's particularly true about God's love for us. God loves each and every one of us as the crown of his creation on earth. That love is worth even more than 6,000 days wages; in fact, it is priceless.

-- There's a funny thing about love, though. Love which is buried is useless. Love only blossoms when it is shared. Ask any married couple. Ask anyone who has reached out to help someone who is poor, or has just suffered the loss of someone close, or who just needs someone to listen to them.

-- Of course, there is a risk in sharing love. The main risk is that the person we love may not return that love. We can be rejected. We can be disappointed that our efforts don't bear the fruit we expect.

-- But God asks us to take that risk. Because, even when we feel rejection, our love will bear fruit in some other way. Look, for example, at Mother Teresa.

-- For many years, she found it hard to pray, to do all the great work she was doing. She often felt like she was going through the motions. But she persevered. And that is why she is a saint—for being faithful, not for being successful.

-- Each of you has been given a penny. It seems so small. I'd like you to keep it with you, at least for a day or two, to remind you that it represents God's love for you and his gifts to you.

-- As small as it seems, it is worth much more than if that coin was made of solid gold rather than copper. After a day or two, you can give it to someone else.

-- As you do so, think of how you share your love and God's gifts in your life. For those gifts are like the light of the candles on this altar.

-- When that light is shared—when another candle is lit from it—the light from the first candle is not diminished. On the contrary, it multiplies itself. That is what we do at the beginning of the Easter Vigil when we first enter a dark Church.

-- Our love is like that light. When we share it, it's not diminished, but multiplied. But when we hold love in, when we keep it to ourselves, it withers and dies. That's what happened to the man who buried his talent.

-- Yes, it's risky to share love. If we don't take that risk, the life Christ has freely given us will surely die. But if we share it, that love will be multiplied many times over.