



**St. Catherine of Siena
Martinez, Parish Newsletter -
June 2010**

*A monthly publication of the Parish
Communications Committee*

The focus for your newsletter this month is service, in all its forms.

It might be helpful to recount the Gospel according to Matthew 25:14-30, which is widely known as the parable of the talents.

"For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.

To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.

Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more.

But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.'

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge

of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.'

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your

talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'

But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.

Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.

Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.

For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Throw out the worthless servant into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Because of the nature of parables they are not intended to be taken too literally because to do so might hide the important lessons which they all contain.



The story St. Matthew contains an inner narrative which centers on using the gifts, advantages and talents that God gives each of us, in such a manner that greater glory will be reflected back on the Father.

Each of us in this congregation has talents, some have the gift of song, others the ability to write or work with children or groups of people. Some are blessed with the ethic of being able to work hard, for long periods of time.

Each of us is different, as God intended. But taking the lesson from the words of St. Matthew, our Creator didn't simply endow us with special abilities so that they could be used in a less than complete or indiscriminate manner.

Of course we are expected to use these gifts to find and to help establish our way in the temporal world, but with each of these abilities comes a responsibility; that we also put them to use in a more direct manner, to help our brothers and sisters, to comfort them when afflicted, to guide them when they might have lost their way and in general to help in small ways to extend the hand of God, to further His plan.

One way chosen by some is serving in defense of our country, which has been blessed - far beyond measure - with a bountiful abundance of wealth, beauty and moral purpose.

Giving us the benefit of his experience, the following was written by a member of our parish, C.C. Salonga, who served in the United States Navy for many years.

HONORING THE U. S. MILITARY

By C.C. SALONGA LT, SC, USN [RET]

As proud servicemen, it is our duty to make this world as good and as safe a place as we can. We are blessed in this country, and I believe that the rest of the world would be blessed if they lived with the same sort of freedom we have in America where some individuals choose for a while to give up a share of their individual liberty in order that the rest might be protected.

Those of us who volunteer for military service do so because we love our country. Those who serve in our Armed Services are asked to demonstrate courage through unyielding devotion to duty. We do this in many ways. Some enjoy the excitement of doing a difficult and often dangerous job well. Some admire the virtues shown by heroes of earlier times. Those who serve and sacrifice for our country set an example for us all about motivation and courage. I find inspiration in those men and women who served and died for our country.

History sometimes breaks our hearts, we remember the Holocaust, our own American

Revolution, Civil War, the battle of the Alamo, WW I & II, Korea, Vietnam, the current conflicts in the Middle East and the war and the effort to end terrorism. History can hurt, and my moist eyes speak my deep concern. But the hard truths can't be ignored. Those who serve in our military love America because of its role in preserving the world's greatest democracy and our numerous freedoms.

We are a nation of immigrants, a nation of free enterprise, a unique culture made of other cultures. The American dream is described in terms of freedom - to pursue happiness, freedoms that for generations have attracted peoples from other lands such as the freedom to worship or to express ourselves free from governmental interference.

Our soldiers pay taxes and vote, but they also take a solemn oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic.

Our military is under civilian control, while our elected officials debate the nature of our nation's foreign policy, it is our job to loyally support what we are asked to do, even if it calls for us to make the ultimate sacrifice.

We must remember that our 55 founding fathers - those who framed the Constitution and the Declarations of Independence - were human, not demigods. They came here to escape religious persecution and then defended those ideas as part of the revolution.

The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution aren't just pieces of paper. They contain written words - beautiful words, hot words, words with bite. Yet these documents became the script for a society based on liberty and freedom. They contained words that would spell either life or death for the new nation.

This foundation launched a revolution which produced a national spirit that gave reality to hopes and dreams for freedom, christened with the blood of many who serve in the military.

This is the America in which I believe and for which we fought for around the world, a country which includes names like Lomeli, Gibson, Silva, Hammond, Hems, Wallace, Aires, Bellezas, Palmer, Father Neal Clemens and the Salongas of Martinez.

We served and fought in battles scattered across the Persian Gulf, WW II, Korea, Okinawa, Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Bosnia, Cuba, and Lebanon.

This is the America my uncle fought and died for during the Bataan Death March - forced at gunpoint to march 85 miles without food and drink and later shot and bayoneted.

The overwhelming majority of American servicemen believe in the Ten Commandments, handed down to Moses on stone tablets by God on Mount Sinai some four thousand years ago.

These brave Americans are heroes, Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian; they are Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims and Atheists. They come from the fifty states of

the Union, Republicans, Democrats and Independents. Today they fight terrorism, and try to bring justice and peace to a troubled world.

We honor them because of their unselfish devotion...they are primitive patriots, loyal to our government and the Constitution - defenders of our democratic principles and way of life. They spend years on deployment, work and toil without rest. They suffer the pain of loneliness, but with perseverance and a sense of humor they survive and continue to serve with distinction and honor.

Thinking back 150 years ago in our history, President Lincoln's performance during the Civil War was the touchstone that pulled America through one of its greatest challenges, perhaps one of the toughest periods in our nation's history. We are here today, because Lincoln did what had to be done. FDR's strong leadership and optimism was our rallying point for victory in WW II. President Truman gave the order to drop the atomic bombs in August 1945 to save at least a million of American soldiers' lives if we had to invade Japan - and countless Japanese civilians who would have been killed as a result of a bloody invasion.

President Kennedy ordered the blockade of Cuba in 1962 during the "Missile Crisis" in order to avoid World War III. President Teddy Roosevelt, carried a big stick, spoke softly and ordered the 16 American Battleships of the "Great White Fleet" to sail around the globe in 1903 to show the American flag and to convince all foreign powers that America had emerged as a

major sea power and would deter any aggression upon the United States.

President Reagan kept our military so strong that any potential adversaries did not dare to provoke us.

Those who never came back gave the ultimate sacrifice. The price that must be paid for a chance to wear the military uniform is as steep as it's always been. Our freedom has cost so many lives. We celebrate their lives, their service to humanity as peacemakers.

They were the fathers we never knew, the uncles we never met, the friends who never returned, they are heroes we can never repay.

We are the children of their sacrifices. We are the sons and daughters they saved. Some of them are still here worshipping at St. Catherine's. When they were young, they made this world safe for democracy. They are truly a blessing in our life and we owe a great debt of gratitude to all of them. We honor them for their service and sacrifices in war and in peace.

God Bless America!

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