“You wicked, lazy servant!” These are strong words but customary in Matthews writings to the Jewish culture of this time.

How would you translate this remark in today’s society? Certainly, we are not wicked or lazy. We obey the laws of the land, we pay our taxes and we give to charities. Who is it that built this beautiful space to worship, and such a fantastic pipe organ to help with our songs of praise???

So then we are all like the two good servants.

Maybe not! Are we taking the talents = not the material wealth as in this story, but the love and the faith that God gave us and doubling them? Are we, at the very least, using God’s gifts to make some amount of improvement in our parish, community or world?

Interesting point in today’s message: the master knew his servants well enough to assign his wealth accordingly. He expected the servants with the 5 and 2 talents to be more aggressive than the 1 talent servant. While he was prepared to receive the smallest return from this particular servant, he didn’t think that the coin would just be buried for no gain at all. The Master expected at least a little interest, even from this irresponsible servant.
Now let’s bring this scripture reading into our very own lives. God is the Master — so that makes you and me the servants, right?

First of all, we all know that the biblical word “talents” was used as a measure of weight. But now, we define talent as a gift or an ability; as in a person having a talent for music, or growing flowers, or finding a parking space at the 4PM Mass on Christmas Eve.

In Paul’s Letter to the Romans (Chapter 12), we learn: “. . . for as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually, parts of one another” Paul is telling us that each one of us has our own part in this body of Catholic Church, but that part must be intertwined with many others for completion.

Today, I ask you to think about the talents that God has given you. I ask you to think about all the gifts you have received from Him. Let’s do this: For just a few seconds, quietly put in your mind the talents and gifts that God has blessed you. (ten or 15 seconds seem like eternity)

Now, ask yourself, “Which talent is your best. What are you really good at, or what do you enjoy the most?”

Now, imagine yourself standing before God, wondering if you were a 5-talent servant or a 1-talent servant.
Most of all, and this is a very important, how have you in the past and how will you from now on, use your individual talents for the good of the one body, the Church?

Not talking about just volunteering for a project to be checked off. The Master, Our Creator anticipates a return on the love He has for each individual.

Some of you have been gifted with more than some of us! And God expects all talents that He gave to us to be used for His greater glory.

Even a one-talent person brings joy to God for making use of such a personal gift. It doesn’t matter whether you have 1 or 5 or 50 talents. I believe it an insult to abuse or neglect the many gift that the Father gives.

In a homily you can only have very little time to contemplate the true extent of God’s gifts, but that’s ok. I just wanted to plant the seed that will spread and grow in your mind and heart. Essentially, for the rest of the day and in to next week, I want you to be upset with me for putting this in the forefront of your mind == a Catholic Guilt trick.

I found a saying on the internet that is signed Author unknown but I’m sure most of us remember hearing it from a loving and spirit-filled priest:

What you are is God’s gift to you.

What you become is your gift to God.