

## THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A

Imagine you are a member of a Christian community from the earliest days of the Church, and you are sharing fellowship after the Eucharistic banquet, listening to the older members, ones who had been with Jesus during his life and ministry, had witnessed his resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and who now were relating some of the stories and sayings they remember.

Those early years were difficult. The members of the community had to be careful. A lot of members had already been put to death and the whole enterprise sometimes seemed like it was going to be overwhelmed by the darkness in the world. People were struggling to remain faithful.

But then one of the elders reminds us that Paul had gone through the same experience with the Thessalonians. They also had started to question whether they could keep on. They found themselves longing for the Lord to simply come and break the tension and usher in the new creation he had promised. Paul had simply reminded them that no one knows when the end will come. He told them not to get too worried, but not to get too comfortable either.

That brings another of the elders to remember one of Jesus' parables—the one about the master who left his servants in charge of his fortune while he went away. How he had given one 5 bushels of gold to work with, another 2 bushels, and another one bushel. Needless to say, even the one who only received one bushel had more money than he had ever laid eyes on.

## THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A

But then the elder turned to his listeners and said, “Why are you sitting around grouching and speculating about things you can’t control or even guess at? Have you any idea of what you’ve been given to work with? What are you doing with your millions?”

At this point one of the women who had been with Jesus chimes in and asks, “And what do you think is the point of the story? Do you think it’s about how much work the servants did? Or about the profit they made, or the risks they took? No! It’s about what they learned and who they became by doing or not doing what the master would have done.

She continued, “The point of the story is that two servants learned to love doing what the master did. They had seen him at work and learned to do it the way he did and had the results to show for it.

And he hardly paid any attention to that, but seeing that they “got it,” that they understood what he had intended from the beginning, he said, “Well done! Now, come share my joy.”

Our elders would have us understand that the master in the story isn’t really interested in the money or the return on investment. What he really is interested in is that we experience what the business of life is all about. Servants who imitate his way of working get caught up in his way of living. By the time the master returns, the servants are already sharing in his joy.

## THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A

Pity those who refuse to get involved. Given much, they choose not to relish the opportunity to do something with it. The unwilling see everything with suspicion. Refusing the trust they are given, they put the master's offer in a grave, suffocating their own potential. They are grinding their teeth in the darkness way before the master returns.

If we want to imagine the daily life of a joyful servant, the “worthy wife” of today's first reading provides a good example. She takes what she's been given and does more with it. She enjoys doing so, too, and that brings joy to others. She's full of life and life abounds in her presence.

Following her example, we can learn how to relish the millions of moments that make up the time of our life and begin already now in sharing the master's joy at an invitation extended and accepted and put to good use.