

FR. KEVIN DILLON'S HOMILY DATED 15.11.2020

In getting prepared for this weekend's mass, I was much relieved to find that our reader for this particularly the online would be a lady, a lovely lady – Tinika, who is here at this mass because you can imagine had we had a gentleman. First reading – a perfect wife. Who can find her? The Word of the Lord. Finish off there.

So looking at different scripture verses and just taking them exactly as they are found can be somewhat problematic but it was a lady reading it, made it just little bit more manageable. The rest of it, you can debate amongst yourselves in your own time.

I was thinking and looking at the gospel today, it's funny how sometimes you can remember vividly different events which sort of stand out.

I can remember going into the parish office at Geelong, where I was at the time – 2009, and one of our wonderful volunteers there, a lady by the name of Margaret who may well be watching this, she's now living in Queensland but she called me over and says, "Have a look at this" and it was a YouTube clip. Wonderful YouTube which makes our mass possible to those watching on the internet. It was of a lady who had appeared on a show that I hadn't heard of before called Britain's Got Talent.

Now we all know about those shows now of course, but it was the audition of a little lady from Scotland, a little village in Scotland, at the time, she was 47 years of age, so she would be heading up close to 60 by now. The name – Susan Boyle. Her audition is probably one of the most watched YouTube clips ever. An extraordinary story of a woman close to 50 who had stayed home, never married, never had children, never really had any sort of a major career, looked after her ailing mother who died well into her 90s, singing in the local church choir. She was a Catholic, remains so, faith is important to her and somehow or other, she decided to have a crack at Britain's Got Talent and the rest as they say is history.

Extraordinary story of someone who always had this marvellous capacity to sing so beautifully but only a handful of people in her church had really heard her. Somehow or other, someone gave her the encouragement that she needed to say, why don't you have a go. And one thing led to the other, recording contracts and so on. That's one of the really happy stories of recent times of someone discovering her talent but it wasn't really that she discovered that. She always knew she could sing. She just didn't have the opportunity to be able to express that and give the happiness to people as she has done in the past 11 years.

The word 'talent' of course, that we hear in the gospel, we think of mainly in terms of a capacity to do something well – whether it's singing, playing a musical instrument, might be in some areas of science, it might be being able to unravel the mysteries of an iPhone, can be any number of different things for which we say we've got a talent, a capacity to do things but that's not the only meaning of the word as we hear in the gospel.

With the parable of talents, it was ascribed to an amount of money that given but it was money given, something given, to those servants and the longer version of the Gospel tells of the one who got two and the one who got none. We've heard the story before the one who got two made two more, the one with who only got give made give more and the one who got one, he buried it and he did nothing with it and he was not very popular as a result of doing that with this master because his master said "I gave it to you to do what you could with it and you did nothing at all."

So we are familiar enough with the story that Jesus told us but it's the message that we've got to take on board and first of all of recognizing that we do have the talent but maybe the word itself gets in the way of us getting the message.

If you substituted the word 'talent' for equipment. You have the equipment to make this a better world by using what you have been given is essentially the message that Jesus is giving us in the Gospel. So what we can do today maybe is to look into our own lives and minds and hearts and say, well, okay, what equipment has God given me to make this a better world and that doesn't mean changing the whole world, but the world in which I live.

Now, in Susan Boyle's case, she went from a little village in Scotland to having her talent made known and enjoyed and recognized the world over and that's not going to happen to many but that could happen and it did happen to her. Turn the clock back 11 years and she would never have believed that her life would have taken the turn that it did. But she was still the same person. She was still the same Susan Boyle the day before that audition that catapulted her into worldwide recognition, still the same person the day before and the day after but she was able to use what God had given her in a very special way and she's produced many of the albums, that's she's of course have featured inspirational and sacred songs and so her sense of the importance of God, the importance of faith was very much part of the way in which she used her equipment, her talent, her gift.

One of the songs on her very first album was a song which she didn't write but it was one of those sort of uplifting songs and she included it in her first album "Who I was born to be".

*When I was a child,
I could see the wind in the trees
And I heard a song in the breeze
It was there, singing out my name
But I'm not a girl
I have known the taste of defeat
That I've finally grown to believe
It will all come around again
And though I may not know the answers
I can finally say, I'm free
And if the questions let me hear them
I am who I was born to be.*

I suppose the word that comes to mind as you read those, listen to those words and lyrics

is the word 'destiny'. What is it that God calls you, to me too and maybe we can look at our lives, particularly those of us who are a bit further along the track and we can see milestones, crossroads, particular points in which our life changed, and God gave us a talent – again, not an ability, but he gave us the equipment. It might be another person, that equipment might be another person who came into our lives at a special time that was going to make that difference, and having made a difference to us, we can make a difference to others.

The parable that Jesus tells us today is a beautiful one and I've always found it far better to concentrate not so much on the guy who went and buried the talent. That can be part of the story, there might be part of the stories of all of us in some capacity but there's a sense of you know – don't do the wrong thing, use your gifts etc but more importantly, let's have a look and identify what they are and really ask the Lord to help us to use that equipment that He has given us. It might be something called personality, might be something that's called generosity. We know people who are of a generous spirit and they can light up the world. We know people who just have an optimistic outlook on life and we can be having a bad day and they can make an enormous difference to the days of those around them and they'll have bad days themselves of course, but somehow or other, there is this capacity to make the world a better, brighter and happier place and we haven't all got the same gifts. We haven't all got the same equipment and thank goodness for that because it's the complementary nature of that, that is meant to be put together.

So let's take a leap out of the fellow that had the five and it's nothing to do with money. It's got to do with what God has given us, me, you, in our life. He basically says – go and build a better world with what I have given you because I gave it to you for that reason. So, we've got to say, well, what is it?

The case of Susan Boyle is a worldwide example of how something can be there but either unrecognized by the person themselves and you see even in the little video clip which we have on our website (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxPZh4AnWyk>), that she was a very humble person and yet this extraordinary gift to entertain but also to bring people into a sense of God's love and help and capacity to make the world a better place.

Let's identify our own equipment, our own talent and use what we've been given as well as we can.
