

**Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.  
Homily at the Mass at the AMS Benefit  
November 18, 2017**



During this calendar year, I have used the story of Welles Crowther, the BC alumnus who guided several people to safety before the World Trade Center collapsed and killed him. His was the story of one who drew on his talents in extraordinary circumstances and gave life. Military history is filled with examples of men and women who gave the utmost in the service of their country. These are people who responded in concrete situations without counting the cost.

Veterans' Day observances are a moment for us to pause and give thanks in prayer for those living and dead who served. This evening is a significant moment for this archdiocese to gather in prayer for their intentions, to renew our collective resolve to meet the needs of those entrusted to her pastoral care, and to give thanks for a century of that same care. We do so in the context of the Church's liturgical meditation on τα εσκατα, the last things which helps us to praise authentic virtue, lasting values, and the use of our gifts.

The wonderful passage from the Book of Proverbs urges us to see in the allegory of the model wife and mother a symbol of the Chosen People who recognize in fidelity to the Lord the source and strength that assures their future and ultimate joy.

In our context this evening we might see the order and training so evident in the branches of the military. That discipline prepares for armed conflict, but it also makes the armed forces experts to be deployed in the face of natural disasters, as we have just seen in Puerto Rico and elsewhere. The worthy wife clearly recognizes and fulfills her goals. So also authentic patriotism ensures the greatness and success of a people.

St. Paul in the second reading reminds us that every thoughtful person has the sensation that the securities of this world are falling apart. Therefore, he calls to our attention to the end of this life which is the beginning of the other. It requires our attention.

The only reasonable response is to live in vigilance, to continue to seek, and desire with confidence the definitive future

The importance of vigilance and attention to fundamental questions, which the Church repeatedly asks of us in these days, are not macabre, but a call to realism and a Christ-centered existence. This call is fundamental to our baptism when we died and rose with Christ. It orients our daily response and keeps our hope-filled vision fixed on a lasting homeland not built by human hands.

Pope Francis reminds us that: “Christ’s resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force. Often it seems that God does not exist: all around us we see persistent injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty. But it is also true that in the midst of darkness...[and] On razed land life breaks through, stubbornly yet invincibly. However dark things are, goodness always re-emerges and spreads. Each day in our world beauty is born anew, it rises transformed through the storms of history... Such is the power of the resurrection, and all who evangelize are instruments of that power.”<sup>1</sup>

In that context we look at the parable in the Gospel this evening. The use of talents, the multiplication of wealth, and the reckoning on the Master’s return do not form the agenda for the next archdiocesan Finance Council meeting. The Lord is calling us to a more profound examination of our journey and our responsibility to make use of what we have received—or perhaps better yet to recognize the sense of gift in the community of faith. The concept is well understood by those who call us here this evening.

The parable invites us to understand that we use our talents for values that last. That message must be repeated ceaselessly in the materialistic world in which you and I live. We all enjoy comfort and we shudder to think of our dear brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico who are still without electric power. Yet comfort cannot define us. You and I have been called to soar into eternal life.

We are here because we know of the examples of self-less service that abound in the military and our VA medical centers are filled with those healing, because of that service. We apply that value of service to patria or patriotism to the gift of faith we have received and we recognize that it is a gift meant to be shared.

The parable of the talents then is about multiplying the gift of faith itself. Perhaps, as in the example of military heroes or Welles Crowther we realize our abilities when we challenged. Discipleship teaches us to be courageous when situations drag us beyond our comfort zone.<sup>2</sup>

We are continually challenged to share our faith effectively so that others might see our example and live theirs fruitfully. Evangelization is a constant task for everyone who

---

<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 276.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Daniel Mueggenborg, *Come Follow Me, A*, pp. 326 ff.

believes. Our sending forth from the Eucharist is a charge to share what we have received. That is ever more important in our distracted contemporary age.

As one who loves the change of seasons, I could not help but to be struck by the beauty of the colored leaves especially last Friday en route to Boston and in New York City. That beauty reminds us of the purpose of creation by an all-loving God: so that we could share in His joy.

In the Gospel the first two servants recognized that the time of the master's journey was a time of waiting, a graced opportunity to bear fruit. As one who detests waiting, I must always remind myself of the possibilities. The use of time is crucial, but all time is a gift and we can always fill it well, if we are open to the Lord who calls us and offers us His gifts. Indeed, the great theologian St. Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Patience is said to be the root and safeguard of all the virtues, not as though it caused and preserved them directly, but merely because it removes their obstacles."<sup>3</sup>

The first two servants also destroy the myth that there is some dichotomy between theological comprehension and the spirit of service. The good servants in the parable both knew the Master's will (theology) and fulfilled it (effective service). Sound pastoral practice is always an application of authentic doctrine. Otherwise it is not really pastoral

In fact, what happens to the third servant? His faith is deeply personal: "I knew you were a demanding person..." At least he assumes that he knows the master. Did he? Faith is never intended to remain only a private experience that does not bear fruit. Faith obliges us to go forth, to invite others in, and to make Christ known by the manner of our lives.

It might be useful today as we gather both on the commemoration of the dedication of the papal basiliche of St. Peter and St. Paul, the memorial of St. Rose Duchesne and on the day of the beatification of Friar Solanus Casey in Detroit to recall one of the simple Franciscan's reflections:

"It seems to me that were we only to correspond to God's graces, continually being showered down on every one of us, we would be able to pass from being great sinners one day to be great saints the next."

Dear Friends, we gather in this shrine to a great saint of our times to pray for Veterans and to give thanks for those who have served and continue to serve our Nation. I framed our gathering by remembering young Welles Crowther and the many heroes in the national pantheon. Important, however, in these days is to look forward and go out as missionary disciples of the good news about Jesus Christ. Only He offers life without end.

---

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, II-IIae, q.136, a.2,r.3.

