

Reflections on 33rd Sunday of Year A.

Mass: Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31; Psalm 127; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; Matthew 25:14-30.

This story in the Gospel is rooted in the history of Israel and the struggle of this new, mainly Jewish, Christian community to work out its future. We tend to see the servants who made the profits as essentially good capitalists. In reality at the time they were more dodgy profiteers, people who made money out of their fellow Jews. The last servant says as much when he accuses the employer of being a 'hard' man. Interest was a forbidden word for fellow Jews, it meant exploitation, just as it did for Christians until the end of the Middle Ages. So why was Jesus apparently commending these dodgy characters. It is also good to remember that Jesus too was seen as a sinner, someone who was excluded from Israel and executed outside the city and temple. At the time that the Gospel was written, probably after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jewish people, largely accepted the traditions of the Pharisees with their tight emphasis on the Law and who was in and who was out or excluded. An emphasis on holding on to the past or as the parable says, burying for safety. Matthew talks about taking risks with the Law and tradition in order to grow his community. It is a lesson for all times of change, especially today when we face a changing Church in a changing world.