

FR ALAN'S REFLECTION

FULFILLING OUR POTENTIAL

There is the story of a Chinese boy who came from a very poor family in Hong Kong who never dreamed that he would go far in life. His parents left him behind to do a housekeeping job in Australia. Gifted with talents for doing stunts and acrobatics, he developed and cashed in on these until he rose to become a famous movie actor multi-millionaire and Asia superstar. That is Jacky Chan, the Kung Fu kid.

Jesus in today's Gospel Parable of the Talents tells us a story of a wealthy landowner who was preparing for a long journey. He called his three servants and divided his money between them, each according to their ability and expected them to administer these. To one servant he gave five talents, meaning a sum of money, to a second two, and to a third one.

In other words, Jesus is telling us that God has entrusted us with so many talents, skills, graces, blessings, and gifts. Success is not about whether we become rich and famous but rather is about whether we have made the best use of those gifts that we have been given in service of others. It is about not selling ourselves short on what we can do. This is echoed by St Paul in this Sunday's Second Reading. He addressed the Thessalonians who were preoccupied with thoughts of when the world would end. St Paul reminded them that what was important was that they lived in the present moment with the utmost responsibility.

The First Reading from the Book of Proverbs praises the quality of a good wife which is an expression of the overwhelming love of God. She was generous in her service towards others because she knew and understood how much God loved her. It is a reminder for all of us that dwelling in the love of God will help us bear fruit in plenty.

The gifts and talents that God gives us really belong to him. How does God want us to use the gifts that he has given us? What are those gifts and how can we better use them for the service of others so that God's kingdom becomes more visible here on earth? It is not a question of whether the talents that we have been given are significant or not. It is rather a question of whether we are trying our best to use them for God and for others.