



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time-Year A-November 15th 2020

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

‘A good wife, who can find?’

My old headmaster, Brigadier John Harper, a personal hero of mine, was full of wisdom – most of it pretty straightforward and, as the years have proved since, right ‘on the money’.

One particular pearl seemed, however, to share that apparently contrary utterance of Jesus (Who is not against us is for us. Who is not for us is against us.) But that’s another sermon for another time.

The Brigadier, J.J., advised us, as young men, as follows:

‘He who travels fastest travels alone....’ AND

‘Every successful and fulfilled man needs a good woman at his side.’

Time has unravelled the mystery. Getting emotionally bogged down as an immature man is not a good idea. When you are ready a good wife and marriage is the most wonderful gift God can give you in the adventure of life.

Of course the picture that this morning’s reading gives us of a good wife is not fashionable. There seems, in this edit, to be an emphasis on her domestic skills. And yet we know that, after fifty years of Feminism, the organisation and smooth running of home and family still depends

disproportionately on the woman. One might almost think that there is an inbuilt biological bent to this nesting and nurturing business.

But that is not how it starts. Her price is beyond pearls says this translation. Actually she is compared to a great jewel, an invaluable treasure, precious beyond measure.

We are told that her husband has confidence in her. His heart listens to her. Her wisdom is invaluable. A wise man benefits from this great well of wisdom that is in his good wife. She is a blessing to him. She will never be to his harm. Sadly this lection omits the bits where we see the wife as a superbly competent manager and shrewd businesswoman.

We observe that she is at the forefront of charitable work- her arms are open to the poor. She is compassionate far beyond her immediate family concerns. She has a wider perspective on the human family.

The writer reminds us that we need not be detained by a priority of charm or beauty. What matters is wisdom and a beautiful heart.

Well those lucky enough to have found such a wife should daily thank God for such a wonderful gift and daily blessing.

But thinking about wives made me reflect on the unstated corollary.

A good husband who can find?

And this is where something needs to be said to the younger men in our society. I have observed, over forty years of ministry, that there are a lot of wonderful Christian women out there who would love a decent Godly , caring husband to share the adventure of life and family with.

For the most part I look around in vain.

Half the problem rests with the long established 'permissive society' that enabled men to obtain food, shelter and sex without obligation or commitment. There has been, in short, no need to mature or take fatherly responsibility. The result is a lot of men heading into middle age who are still 'boys'. They are, of course, missing a huge amount and utterly failing to 'go deep'. I dare to suggest that there are, in fact, a lot of 'good wives' out there but they are desperately waiting for those missing

husbands to grow up and step up to the mark as men, husbands and fathers. There is no greater or more exciting vocation for a man.
.....And being 'Peter Pan' at 50 is frankly embarrassing.