

## Homily 33rd Sunday Ordinary Time 2023

Fr Tommy Welsh, a great friend and confrere of mine, died on the Feast of St Margaret of Scotland, 16th November 2018. This was a most fitting day for Tommy to die as he had a deep devotion to St Margaret of Scotland, was a passionate member of the SNP Party and a fervent campaigner for Scottish Independence, particularly from England (I must clarify immediately that I am not).

St. Margaret who was born in The Kingdom of Hungary, married King Malcolm III of Scotland in 1070. She epitomised today's First Reading from Proverbs, in her concern for and care of the poor: "A perfect wife – who can find her? She is far beyond the price of pearls.....She holds out her hand to the poor, she opens her arms to the needy.

St Paul in today's Second Reading reiterates Jesus' message of last Sunday's Gospel, 'Be ready and MORE because The Lord will come 'like a thief in the night.' Jesus in today's Gospel underlines this expectation of the disciple, not just to do the bare minimum in building The Kingdom but always to strive to do MORE. In the Parable of the Stewards the first two men are praised for their shrewd money trading, making 5 and 2 talents more than they were entrusted with. The third man however, who received one talent, is reprimanded by his master for his laid-back attitude and lack of initiative, "You wicked and lazy servant! You should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return, I would have at least recovered my capital with interest. You will be thrown out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth." The key message is that we are all expected, as disciples of Jesus, to try to use our God-given gifts wisely and MORE, not selfishly for our own ends and purposes, but for the sake of God's Kingdom.

I don't think Fr Tommy knew it, and I never had the heart to tell him, but St Margaret was an English princess born to the expatriate Prince Edward, her family returning to England from exile in 1057. Tommy died very suddenly and prematurely at the age of 67. 'Like a thief in the night.', death took him. In his missionary priesthood and his life, dedicated to the poor and most needy, he most certainly used his talents and MORE to build up God's Kingdom in some of the most challenging parts of the world. The Master undoubtedly, met him at the gate of his heavenly kingdom and said, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Enter now the joy of my Father."

The question I ask myself is, 'John are YOU using your God-given gifts and MORE or are you happy do the bare minimum?'