

**Archdiocese of Cape Town, Synod
24 September 2007**

Some animals and birds together started a school. The school had classes in activities they do, swimming, flying and running. The duck a good swimmer was asked to run and soon became an average swimmer. The rabbit, good at running broke his leg while trying to fly. The eagle, the top one in the flying class was disabled for life when she tried to swim. By the end of the school term none of the animals and birds were very good at anything.

A silly story, but the silliness is the point. God gave everyone of us a unique set of strengths and weaknesses. The Gospel often calls them talents. As St Paul remarks in the first letter to the Corinthians they all come from "the spirit, who distributes them at will and each individual." Those talents are not God's gift to us, they are God's gifts to the world. Not all of us are equally gifted, but we all have the capability to shine the light of God's love entrusted to us.

The parable of the lamp in Luke's Gospel today, evidently refers to the lamp that was left burning at the entrance of Jewish Houses, so that it would give light to those entering. The immediate application is quite clear. The lamp is to give its light to the gentiles who are also coming into the Kingdom. The Jews were not to keep the light of faith just for themselves. They were not to hide it so that no one else would see it, but rather put it on a lamp stand, so that it is made known and easily accessible to people.

Sisters and brothers, we to have been given the light of faith. The parable applies just as well to us. Does our faith shine within our lives so that it can easily be seen by others who may not have been so favoured? Does our Christian life and love attract others to see the influence of our faith in our lives? We know that action speaks louder than words. An ounce of practice is worth a pound of preaching. That is why St Francis de Sales wrote, "we can catch more flies with a spoon full of honey than with a barrel full of vinegar." Today's Gospel passage tells us that we are obliged to give good example, to have the light of our Christians lives shine brightly. How marvelous if through our good example, through our living faith another may be brought to faith in Christ.

Brothers and Sisters, we are here to attend the first ever Synod of the Archdiocese of Cape Town. You are representing +- 220,000 Catholics. You have been elected and send to represent them in this most important gathering. People have great expectations from this Synod. Have you come here with an open heart to receive new light from the Synod? You must go back to your parishes and communities with a new flame of light to enlighten the hearts of your fellow parishioner. After the Synod "do not put your light of inspiration under the bushel of your work and preoccupations". Put it on a lamp stand of your good deeds, so that the entire Archdiocesan Community of believers may be renewed and revived. During this Holy Eucharist let us pray for the grace of perseverance in our faithful actions. Amen

Rev Fr Job Kaleekaparampil MSFS

