ST ANN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
Kingston Hill · London KT2 7LX

Begin With What You Have

Sunday 15 November 2026 · Matthew 25:14-30

My dear friends,

With the new *Ramayana* film now in cinemas, you may have heard about this great Indian epic. There is a little story from that tradition which speaks to today's Gospel.

Rama's helpers were building a bridge across the sea. Mighty monkeys carried huge rocks and trees. Among them, a little squirrel wanted to help.

It rolled in the sand, ran onto the bridge and shook the grains from its fur. Then it went back for more.

The monkeys laughed. What difference could its few grains make?

But Rama recognised its wholehearted effort. The others were giving their strength; the squirrel was giving what it could. He gently stroked its back. The story says that the stripes on Indian palm squirrels remain as the marks of that loving touch.

Now imagine if that squirrel had spent the whole day thinking, "Why am I so small? Why can't I carry what they carry?"

Its contribution would never have been made.

And don't we sometimes do that? "If only I had their money. Their education. Their opportunities." We keep looking at somebody else's life, and meanwhile, our own life is passing.

Comparison can make us overlook the good we could do today.

This has stayed with me since my seminary days: what matters is what we make of what we have received.

In the Gospel, one servant receives five talents, another two, another one. The first two receive the same welcome: "Well done, good and faithful servant." **The servant who brought four talents was welcomed just as warmly as the one who brought ten.** Different amounts, but the same praise for their faithfulness. The servant with one says, "I was afraid," and buries it.

He already had something with which to begin.

So do we.

Think how many worthwhile things begin humbly. Someone who now speaks confidently once struggled to find the words. A person who quietly brings neighbours together may have begun simply by knocking on one door.

We learn by doing. We gain courage by trying. A small beginning can grow into a contribution we never imagined possible.

And this happens throughout our lives. In parenthood, we learn to understand our children, listen more patiently and recognise when we have made a mistake. At work, we develop our skills by taking care over what we do and being willing to learn. We care for our health through the small steps available to us. Even our thinking grows when we listen and reconsider.

We begin where we are. We work with what we have. Some days we make progress; other days we have to try again. **What matters is the sincerity we bring to that effort.**

Life is a beautiful journey. So much can develop from a modest beginning when we give it our attention and care. We do not need to keep checking whether somebody else is ahead. We can notice how we ourselves are learning, improving and contributing.

It is the same with our hall project. Each person's contribution, whether money, time or practical help, has a place in what we are building together.

The little squirrel did not spend its day complaining about the strength it lacked. It used the strength it had.

We do not have to wait until we can carry a mountain.

Let us begin with our handful of sand, and bring our whole heart to it.

Amen.