

## 101109 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time Master What Must I Do?

My dear friends -- for many of us -- we hear the Gospel stories repeated in the three year cycle that the Church has them set out for us... we hear them and I wonder sometimes if we don't just sort of tune them out when we hear the beginning... "Oh - I know what this is about..." And yet -- yet all of Scripture is God's inspired word waiting to move us -- to touch us and often in a new way... moving us to a new area of reflection and action. Even though I prepared for today by going over the readings -- it was just in hearing the first reading proclaimed that the words soaked into me about praying for... begging for Wisdom. That applies to all the readings today.

For example... in just the Gospel -- there were three parts to today's story... Did you catch them? The first is the young man who comes to Jesus as a seeker.... the next part is Jesus doing His teaching and formation with the young man and the disciples... and then the third part is an exchange between Peter and Jesus. While these are distinct parts -- they all tie together into the theme about following one's call.

So -- let's explore this Gospel. Here's a young man -- He is a seeker. In this first teaching from Scripture -- we hear the man do what we all should be doing. Not once at our baptism. Not twice, like at our First Holy Communion. But continuously in our lives.... We should be asking God: "What do I need to do that I'm not doing now?" We already know that the young man tells Jesus that he has adhered to the commandments. So the first thing that the Gospel is going to teach us by this story is that being in compliance with the Commandments isn't enough.

Sadly, we have many in society .... many who even come to Church who don't even adhere to the commandments. I don't mean someone who in a moment of weakness commits a sin and is soon sorry for it... I'm referring to people who by their actions suggest that words or phrases like keeping holy the Sabbath and fornication and adultery and honoring parents and the law -- that these are 'old fashioned.' They don't apply in our modern world. And they make these decisions on their own... and then suggest there is no sin in what they are doing or promoting. To such as these -- not to those who sin and sincerely go to confession... but to those who promote new age ideas and a self-made list of commandments... I suspect that Jesus will be waiting at the gate... and His first words will be, "Oh really.... says who?" But I digress...

Continuing our teaching on just the Gospel: so the young man comes to see Jesus and Jesus is ready to leave on a journey. The young man says, "Can I talk to you please?" Jesus doesn't say, "Look, talk to my secretary Peter and make an appointment... I'll be back in a couple weeks." He stops because the reason Jesus is here on earth is to help seekers. Jesus is not on earth to make sure he catches the camel caravan on time... but to save souls and help people. God forgive me for the times when I am abrupt or impatient when people want to talk to me. And remember you too are a priest by virtue of your baptism... you have the same call to be there to help others.

Here we are still on the first part of the Gospel.

You'll notice that when Jesus responds, he doesn't say to the young man that it's enough that you believe in me and acknowledge me as your personal Lord and Savior... He says you have to... HAVE TO obey the Commandments. Not the ten suggestions... not your own list of things you think would make God happy... but the commandments.

And then Jesus says -- finally -- if you want to be absolutely certain of eternal happiness... you have to be completely detached from the things of this world... We know that was the young fellow's downfall because he had many possessions... He wasn't able to let go of them...

So for any people who come to church and who believe that simply by being here... or simply believing in a person named Jesus... or that Jesus came and did all the work and as long as you agree with that then we are saved.... I think those folks need to go read this Gospel again at home. And just to confirm this point because we have a lot of people who have bought into the Protestant way of thinking about salvation by faith alone -- in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 19 it's very explicit: "If you want to enter into eternal life... that's what it says... IF.... nothing is automatic... I urge us to think about these things during this Mass and during the week ahead of us... to quote a saying -- there is no such thing as cheap grace...

Now... what I love about this portion of the Gospel is this. A little after the young man leaves, Jesus begins to tell his closest followers: how hard it is to get into the kingdom... Jesus gives them an example they will readily understand... about a camel and the needles eye...

It is so evident to them how hard it is to get to Heaven that all of them start wondering if it's possible. And Peter -- impetuous, reactive Peter says something like I might say... .. "Look, I was a success in business when you called me. Back then... even now I could afford an RV and I could drive away heading towards the sun... and never look back. But I didn't Jesus... I gave up my freedom and independence... Here's me - the deacon talking just like Peter in the Gospel: I studied in the seminary for four years.... I feel like I sometimes work for the most disorganized and sometimes gossip-oriented, unChristian group in the world and they say they are your church. Isn't that enough to get me... deacon Tom to heaven?"

And Jesus looks at me warmly and says: Deacon Tom -- you'll be rewarded a 100 times... a 1,000 times over for what you've done... And for those among us here who recognize that Christ is truly present in this, His broken Church... who recognize Christ in the people with dementia over at the Payson Care Center... for those among us who recognize that it is Jesus coming to St. Vincent de Paul and seeking boxes of food handouts and help with their rent... for those who give of their free time to lovingly help to teach CCD and try to form young minds so they will stay in or at least return to their Catholic Faith... for those who are aged but come to daily Masses and faithfully pray the rosary and act as prayer warriors praying for those whose names and intentions have been put on their hearts... for those who visit the sick in the hospitals... for those who do good for the sake of love... not based upon so-called Catholic guilt or some form of social do-good-ism... for all of these people there will come a Voice -- a Voice which speaks to them from within a bright white light.

And that voice will say to them... and hopefully to this complaining deacon: "Come and enter my Father's kingdom." Why? "Because I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink and I was alone and you welcomed me. I was in hospice and you came and held my hand and soothed me as I labored through some of my last breaths."

If you were to come before the living Jesus and you asked Him if you were headed in the right direction... what kind of answer would you get? What if Jesus spoke to you and said, "Give up your house, family, everything you own for me." Would you do it? Or would you be like Peter and say, "Lord -- isn't it enough I came to Church today?" I think we should pray the rest of this Mass... come Holy Spirit... set me on fire... Help me to love God with my whole heart... my whole mind and soul. Wow! Could we ever be changed!

## Reading 1

[Wis 7:7-11](#)

I prayed, and prudence was given me;  
I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.  
I preferred her to scepter and throne,  
and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her,  
nor did I liken any priceless gem to her;  
because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand,  
and before her, silver is to be accounted mire.  
Beyond health and comeliness I loved her,  
and I chose to have her rather than the light,  
because the splendor of her never yields to sleep.  
Yet all good things together came to me in her company,  
and countless riches at her hands.

## Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17](#)

R. (14) Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Teach us to number our days aright,  
that we may gain wisdom of heart.

Return, O LORD! How long?

Have pity on your servants!

R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Fill us at daybreak with your kindness,

that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days.

Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us,  
for the years when we saw evil.

R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Let your work be seen by your servants  
and your glory by their children;

and may the gracious care of the LORD our God be ours;  
prosper the work of our hands for us!

Prosper the work of our hands!

R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Reading II

[Heb 4:12-13](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Indeed the word of God is living and effective,  
sharper than any two-edged sword,  
penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow,  
and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.

No creature is concealed from him,  
but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him  
to whom we must render an account.

Gospel

[Mk 10:17-30 or 10:17-27](#)

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up,  
knelt down before him, and asked him,

"Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good?

No one is good but God alone.

You know the commandments: You shall not kill;

you shall not commit adultery;

you shall not steal;

you shall not bear false witness;

you shall not defraud;

honor your father and your mother."

He replied and said to him,

"Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth."

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him,

"You are lacking in one thing.

Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor

and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

At that statement his face fell,

and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,

"How hard it is for those who have wealth

to enter the kingdom of God!"

The disciples were amazed at his words.

So Jesus again said to them in reply,

"Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle

than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves,

"Then who can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said,

"For human beings it is impossible, but not for God.

All things are possible for God."

Peter began to say to him,

"We have given up everything and followed you."

Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you,

there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters

or mother or father or children or lands

for my sake and for the sake of the gospel

who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age:

houses and brothers and sisters

and mothers and children and lands,

with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come."

or