

**OCTOBER 14, 2018**

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1 [WIS 7:7-11](#)

Responsorial Psalm [PS 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17](#)

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

Reading 2 [HEB 4:12-13](#)

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Gospel [MK 10:17-30](#)

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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."

### **HOMILY:**

A man appeared before heaven's renowned pearly gates, almost to his eternal reward. As he waited at the front of the line to be admitted, St. Peter began leafing through the big book to see if the chap was worthy of entering. Saint Peter poured over the book several times, furrowed his brow, and said to the fellow, "You know, I can't see that you did anything really good in your life, but, you never did anything bad either. Tell you what, ***if you can tell one REALLY good deed, you're in.***" The man thought for a moment and said, "Well, I was driving down the highway and came upon a bar where I saw a group of guys gathered around this poor girl. I slowed down my car to see what was going on, and sure enough, there were about 20 of 'em, tormenting this girl. Infuriated, I got out my car, grabbed a tire iron out of my trunk, and walked straight up to the leader of the gang, a huge guy with a studded leather jacket and a chain running from his nose to his ear. As I walked up to the leader, the gang formed a circle around me. So, I ripped the leader's chain off his face and smashed him over the head with the tire iron. Then I turned around and yelled to the rest of them, 'Leave this poor, innocent girl alone! You're all a bunch of sick, deranged animals! Go home before I teach you all a lesson in pain!'" St. Peter, impressed, says, "Really? I don't see this in my book. When did this happen?" The man replied, "Oh, about two minutes ago."

*How do we gain entrance into the eternal life that is heaven?* This is a question that believers have wondered since this young man in the gospel, speaking to Jesus, asked the question: "What must I do to gain eternal life?" The quick answer to this question is: ***To gain eternal life, we must be good.*** Simple as that: To get to heaven, ***be good.*** This is the message Jesus teaches in today's gospel.

There, we hear, a “man” runs up to Jesus and asks the question of all of our lives: “What must I do to gain eternal life.” Notice that this question, understandably, is about what the man should do, not what kind of person he should be. We later learn that he has a deep, holy zeal to be obedient to the commands of God. This is admirable. He’s a do-er! It is Jesus’ at first puzzling answer that tells us everything about what good must be done to gain eternal life. Let’s look at it closely: “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.”

I need you to hang with me for the next couple minutes of so. Occasionally, I will refer to the fact that the English-translation of the Bible is not the original Biblical language of the New Testament. That is, of course, Greek. Why do we care? Each language has its own special nuances that express subtle meanings. When that language is used to express that most subtle of all topics, God and the ways of God, we may want to mine the original language for treasures that are hidden in a translation. Such is the case with today’s gospel text. There is a simple word used three times in the beginning of the gospel, but translated different ways for us in English. The word: εἷς (heis). In the first verse of the gospel, Mark 10:17, we hear: “a man ran up...” εἷς (heis) here is translated “a man,” though more accurately, it means “someone.” In the next verse, verse 18, that very same word appears twice. Our translation: “No one is good but God alone.” More literally, it could be rendered: “No εἷς (heis) is good but God the εἷς (heis); No ONE is good but God is the ONE.” In summary, when some ONE ran up to Jesus, claiming to be GOOD, Jesus replied that no ONE is good except the ONE who is God. Here, Jesus is overruling the claim of that some-ONE who claimed to be good by referring to the ONE lone source of goodness worthy of full, eternal life. In summary, then, Jesus’ answer to the question of “someone” who ran up to Jesus asking what good we must do to enter into eternal life is: Only God has the goods to enter into eternal life.

As a footnote, notice that later Jesus asks the young man to “sell all he has and give to the poor.” Why? Because in this, he would most imitate God, who “though he was rich, emptied himself” (*cf.* Phil. 2:7). The most characteristic acts of God are His caring for us “poor children of Eve.” When we care for the poor, we most closely align ourselves with the God who alone is Good.

So, as it turns out, in the opening story, St. Peter was right: “If you can tell one really GOOD thing done, you’re in.” Here’s the really good thing we can tell: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It was his coming to care for us in our poverty in the face of death that we have the good thing that opens eternal life for us, we who have been joined to him in baptism. And since we’ve been joined to our Savior, his REALLY GOOD THING becomes our really good thing. That’s good news. Let’s come to Jesus, be joined to him in the Eucharist, and let HIM make us good—good for works of love in this life and good for the joys of eternal life.