

My Dear People of God,

Welcome to the 28th Sunday of Ordinary Time. This Sunday's readings confront us with the challenge of making choices in life and especially choices that affect our eternity with God. The readings also remind us that no significant choice comes without its price. In other words, nothing good comes easy! If however, we make the right choices we are assured that we will be richly rewarded.

In the first reading, we have a short but very pointed praise of wisdom. Scripture Scholars point out that this is part of a speech of King Solomon, who when given a blank check by God, asked not for power or wealth, but for Wisdom. (2Chronicles 1:7-12) and in response God said to him: ***"... wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, possessions and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."*** Because King Solomon had the right disposition, he was granted all things besides.

We all want to be happy in life. We all want to make the kind of choices that will open doors of possibility and guarantee us success. Everyone wants security and wellbeing, and everyone wants peace. We just don't know which doors to open and how far to enter them. We need wisdom to help us make those decisions. The more options we have open to us, the more difficult it is to choose. Do we want power, or riches, or beauty or even health? These are all good things, but will they really satisfy the deepest yearnings of our heart? The answer is NO!

In the gospel reading, we have the famous account of the rich young man who approaches Jesus with a question on what he must do to inherit eternal life. The question we must ask ourselves is: Why did the young man come to Jesus? Many a young person in his position would have been 'very happy' with what he had. From the text we cannot know for certain his motivation. However, it is evident that whatever he had was not making him happy and satisfied. Deep within, he knew that there was more to life than what he had. Most certainly, he had his eye on the ultimate prize; ***the gift of eternal life.***

My dear brothers and sisters, in this gospel text, we are undoubtedly presented with a good young man, the kind of son any parent would be proud of. He knows and has kept all the commandments since his youth. Jesus looked at the young man with love and was able to figure out an obstacle to his attainment of eternal life; he was so attached to his possessions! *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.* He was saddened because what he really wanted, he now discovered would exact a heavy cost and he was not ready to pay!

Sometimes those who have some wealth, even the modest amount, feel they are being condemned when they hear today's gospel. However, the detailed description of the young man's goodness is important in order to show that even the 'righteous' find it difficult to respond to the radical demands of discipleship. The young man could not renounce his riches. It could

also be other worldly/human attachments. Jesus uses this specific case to make a general statement that shocked even His disciples. He uses a graphic example to illustrate how hard it is for those who are encumbered to squeeze through a narrow opening. No where in his teachings does Jesus say that wealth in itself is bad. In fact, riches rightly acquired (including in Biblical times) were considered an indication of divine favor. The key here is attachment!

My dear brothers and sisters, as we continue on our journey faith and as we come towards the end of this liturgical year as well as the calendar year, let us harken to opening words of the Responsorial Psalm today: *“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart”*. In other words, help us to know that we are not permanent in this world, our days are numbered as such we should not so much be attached to things of this world.

Thanks and God bless

Fr. Simon Peter