

Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time October 10, 2021
Our Lady of Perpetual Help

First Reading: Wisdom 7:7-11

⁷ Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. ⁸ I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her. ⁹ Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all gold is but a little sand in her sight, and silver will be accounted as clay before her. ¹⁰ I loved her more than health and beauty, and I chose to have her rather than light, because her radiance never ceases. ¹¹ All good things came to me along with her, and in her hands uncounted wealth. ...

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!

Second Reading: Hebrews 4:12-13

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

¹³ And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Gospel: Mark 10:17-30

¹⁷ And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and

mother.'" ²⁰ And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." ²¹ And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." ²² At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. ²³ And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴ And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." ²⁸ Peter began to say to him, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Someone has observed that if you put a penny close enough to your eye you can block out the sun. So, it is with many good things in life including money and possessions. In and of themselves money and possessions are not bad or evil. In fact, God is the source of them as gifts to us; "for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all." (1 Chronicles 29:11b,12a)

Man's problem with possessions and riches comes from grasping them so close to our heart that they replace the Son as the center of our vision, the apple of our eye. I believe that the point of this week's Gospel Reading, is Jesus' warning about "trusting in riches." As long as we are in this world we still need to relate to possessions and money, but they should be a means of life, not an end. True peace and happiness are enhanced when we recognize that possessions and money are simply tools that enable us to live as God desires. They are a means not an end. This leaves us with the question, "What should be the end or the goal of our existence?" Is it not the same issue with which Jesus confronts the rich young man? Namely, abandon anything in your life that is hindering your commitment, and come follow me. The rich young ruler did much for which he could be commended. Many would say he "had his heart in the right place." Yet his response to Jesus' challenge and invitation to sell all and come follow him, indicated a hesitancy to put the call of Christ ahead of his life of financial security.

Surprisingly, it is often not just wealthy people who are beset by the problem of trusting in riches. Often, we who have little are equally preoccupied with concern about acquiring more money, and our preoccupation blocks out the reality of Jesus Christ and his call to righteous living. Actually, concern about acquiring more possessions and money is simply another way of saying we are trusting in them. Why are we concerned? Because deep in our heart we believe (trust) that they are the key to security, comfort, freedom, peace, and a host of other inner desires. The Scriptures do not tell us how the rich young man ultimately responded, but only indicated the emotional turmoil the decision was obviously causing. As we grow in discipleship and commitment, we often experience a similar initial sorrow as we decide to abandon some attachment we love, for someone who we choose to love more, Jesus. But it is a short sorrow, and as Jesus goes on to teach in this passage this brief sorrow is replaced by surpassing joy which is a hundredfold in comparison, and eternal in value. "Maria Cristina of Savoy, the young, pretty, and cultivated queen of Naples, said...'Although I am healthy, rich, beautiful...What then? And I possess gold and silver...What then? Almost unique in wit and learning...What then? Even if I were to enjoy the world for a thousand years...What then? Soon we die and nothing remains: Serve your God and you will have everything then!'" * This week's first reading says, "Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me." Today's materialistic secular world is rampant with false advice and seductive entrapment to believe that the person who has the most toys wins. Having been bombarded by these messages it will be very difficult to change the way we relate to possessions and money. Perhaps the very first application we should make is to pray daily, consistently asking God for understanding and a spirit of wisdom similar to Maria Cristina of Savoy. Then we might realize that he who has the most toys really loses, and he who serves God, wins.

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INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading

1. How would you summarize the value of wisdom?

Second Reading

2. What does “the Word of God is living and active” mean to you?
3. Give an example of how God’s Word discerns our thought and intentions.

Gospel Reading

4. Where do you see yourself in this story?
5. How would you respond if Jesus issued the same invitation to you?
6. What are some warning signals that would warn us that we are in danger of trusting in money?
7. What motivations do you see for sacrificial living?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.