

## **HOMILY for 28<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year B**

I don't know about you, but it's very unusual for a man in this Sunday's Gospel to approach & ask Jesus such a profound question, namely, "Good teacher, what must I do to share in the everlasting life?" Most human beings are interested in finding out how to get more wealth, power, & fame in this world. The last thing that someone would care about in this life is to possess the everlasting life. So, this man is quite special & spiritual to say the least. Furthermore, he came to the right person to inquire about that. While the religious leaders & the people at the time could not figure out Jesus' identity, this spiritual man could tell that Jesus knew a lot about the everlasting life because He came from that world. So, he came to Jesus to inquire that secret of life. Jesus certainly admired this man & wanted to help him out by pointing him in the right direction to achieve it.

Jesus began by inquiring this spiritual man if he had lived according to the Ten Commandments or not. I'm not sure about Jesus, but I was very surprised to hear his response. He answered, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my childhood." Truthfully, most of us either have broken a few of the Ten Commandments or have completely ignored them altogether like a typical sinner. We often pay very little attention to our spiritual life as well as the Ten Commandments. Without a doubt, Jesus admired this spiritual man for his great start on the road to the Kingdom of Heaven & the eternal life. Today's Gospel shares with us Jesus' response to his lifestyle as following, "...Jesus looked at him with love & told him, 'There is one more thing you must do. Go & sell what you have & give to the poor; you will then have treasure in Heaven. After that, come & follow me.'" So, why did Jesus require this spiritual man to get rid of his worldly wealth? Wasn't it good enough for him to follow Ten Commandments & have a strong spiritual life?

As you might know, worldly wealth is the source of corruption to the soul & the cause of many terrible fights in our human history. People often get envied of one another on how much possession their neighbors might have. They never seem to have enough wealth; & they keep on fighting with one another to get more of it. In fact, the root of most human fights has been about worldly wealth. Jesus knew how corrupted worldly wealth is to our spiritual life & once said, "Where your treasure is, your heart will be." That is why He tried to help the spiritual man in today's Gospel to detach himself from this world & its wealth & attach himself to the Kingdom of Heaven & its eternal life instead. Otherwise, he would be tempted & veer off from the road of Heaven at some point by the lure of worldly wealth. His lifestyle according to the Ten Commandments would not be strong enough to withstand the temptation of material possessions. Certainly we are not surprised to see this spiritual man walking away sad because he had lots of possessions! Jesus then concluded, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God! ... It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."

Obviously as Jesus' disciples, we all have made great sacrifices & traded worldly stuffs for a place in Heaven. For we know that eternal life in Heaven is worth more than anything on earth. We realize that eternal life is much longer & happier than the longest life on earth; & that's why we would do anything to possess the eternal life. Moreover, Heavenly things are worth more than all the wealth on earth. All in all, it is a good trade-off for us Christians if we are willing to have less things on earth in order to have more things in Heaven someday. In fact,

if we talk to some people who have had a near-death experience to learn more about the life in Heaven, we would hear that they love that awesome feeling & want it to last forever. They recall feeling a sense of warmth & peace embracing them as they float toward the light at the far end. One they get back to earth, they cherish that unforgettable experience & would do anything to have a taste of it again.

In case we still have doubt about the near-death experience or life after death, today's First Reading gives us a taste of it via prudence & wisdom. Those gifts come from God & bring us wonderful blessings beyond this world. Here is how today's First Reading tells us about those gifts: "I prayed, & prudence was given me; I pleaded, & the spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepter & throne, & 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, & before her, silver is to be accounted mire... Yet, all good things together came to me in her company, & countless riches at her hands." So, prudence & wisdom are worth more all the worldly riches such as priceless gem, gold, & silver. Moreover, they bring us lots of good things if we embrace them & stay in their company. If prudence & wisdom have that great potential, can you imagine what else might be waiting for us in Heaven & the eternal life?

My dear brothers & sisters, Jesus was asked, "Good teacher, what must I do to share in the everlasting life?" He told us that we must follow the Ten Commandments & most importantly detach ourselves from the worldly possessions. Therefore, if we would like to have a share in the eternal life & the Kingdom of Heaven, we must detach ourselves from this world & begin to dream about the next life. Otherwise, that wonderful world would not mean a lot to us. For Jesus once said, "Where your treasure is, your heart will be." Furthermore, today Jesus promises us that He will reward us in the Kingdom of Heaven for all the sacrifices that make for Him here on earth. So, let's do it & begin to think about Heaven & the eternal life day & night.