

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time Theme: “GOOD TEACHER, WHAT MUST I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?” - MARK 10:17

On this 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time’s Gospel reading, St. Mark presents us with a story of a rich young man who ran up and knelt before Jesus with this question: “GOOD TEACHER WHAT MUST I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?” This rich young man had everything except true lasting happiness and peace that he could not buy with his wealth. He knows Jesus is the only one that can give him this true happiness and peace that leads to eternal life. Yes, he is looking for eternal life, heavenly life, not a temporal life, an earthly life. Jesus reminded him the only good teacher is not he but God, the source of all goodness who alone can grant him the gift of eternal life. According to Mark, Jesus referred him to the Ten Commandments to which the rich young man replied he has observed all of them since his youth.

Wow, would you be able to say you also have observed all the Ten Commandments since your youth? Hmmm! Jesus looks at him with love and admiration because he notices his sincerity. Then Jesus 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 and follow me.” St. Mark tells us: “His face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.”

Fellow beloved parishioners, there are many lessons we must learn from this 28th Sunday reading, especially the Gospel reading.

First lesson: The rich young man does not find lasting happiness and peace in his wealth. He goes to Jesus who alone can help him to find this eternal life God created him for. Unfortunately, he was not ready to let go of his wealth so that he can develop a deeper relationship with God, his creator. This rich young man searching for eternal life reminds us of all we learned a couple of years ago in catechism that God created us with our main purpose in life is to gain eternal life. Are we still focusing on this purpose that God created us for?

Second lesson: As you heard in the Gospel reading, Jesus did not look down on him. He looks at him with great love and admiration because Jesus notices his sincerity. Again, are we serious and sincere in our search for Jesus and the eternal life he has promised us? Jesus notices that this man lacks one thing, namely his wealth, which is an obstacle for him to inherit the eternal life he is looking for. If he would let go of it and put his total trust and faith in Jesus, he will then inherit eternal life. Fellow parishioners, Jesus is not condemning wealth if only it will help you to serve God and your neighbors well. Remember, material blessings are not an end but a means to an end. That is, we are obliged to use our resources, wealth, to serve God and our neighbors.

Jesus asks him to sell everything God has blessed him with and give it to the poor for him to have treasure in heaven, which is the **third lesson** we can learn from today’s reading. Jesus wants this rich man to exchange his temporal treasure for more permanent treasure in heaven. Mark tells us he went away sad because he had many possessions. Beloved, he was not prepared to let go of his wealth to follow Jesus and inherit the most precious treasure, namely eternal life. What kinds of wealth, namely material property, friendship, jobs, styles of life, intellectual knowledge etc., are a hindrance to our salvation? We must let go of this wealth for us to gain eternal life.

The **fourth lesson** can be found in the answer the man gave to Jesus: “Teacher, all of these, meaning the Ten Commandments, I have observed from my youth.” For this man, he thought eternal life is achieved only by observing all the Ten Commandments. Jesus teaches him and all of us that observing the Ten Commandments and Church’s laws does not make us authentic Christians, hence do not qualify us for eternal life. Jesus reminds us that eternal life is more than avoiding evils, bad things. It really requires a great sacrifice of unconditional love for God, neighbors, and yourself. Fellow parishioners, for us to gain eternal life, we must turn to the Word of God as the second and first readings also remind us. God’s word is very effective and a true source of divine wisdom. It is this wisdom that Solomon prayed for in the first reading we just heard. King Solomon teaches us that the wisdom of God surpasses earthly things. He put it so beautifully: “I preferred her (meaning wisdom of God) to scepter and throne (power/authority) and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her.” Yes, the Word of God must be our “GPS” to eternal life. We will surely find true wisdom in the Word of God that will lead us to eternal life. This reminds me of the great Scripture scholar St. Jerome saying: Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.”

Next week is World Mission Sunday. It is a day we thank God for our missionaries and all those who support the mission. It is the day we are asked to support the mission work being done around the world. We’ll have a second collection to help the Church’s outreach in over 1,150 mission territories.

During this month of the Holy Rosary, let us turn to Holy Mother Mary and her beloved husband, St. Joseph, to pray to God to bless us with divine wisdom that is more precious than gold. Amen!