Thursday after Ash Wednesday

ENSLAVEMENT

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" Luke 9:24

ST PETER ARMENGOL

St. Peter Armengol was the son of Arnold Armengol, a member of the Spanish hierarchy. St. Peter fell into the secular trap of self-centeredness, self-gratification, and outright depravity. He joined a band of criminals that preyed on people traveling into the mountains. St. Peter was so good at this work he eventually became the gang leader.

Two years after St. Peter left home, his dad (Arnold) was asked by King Jaime of Aragon to keep him safe from criminals praying on travelers. As Arnold Armengol led the king's entourage through the mountain passes, they were attacked by a band of highwaymen, and made a counterattack. With his sword drawn, Arnold headed directly for the leader of the pack. As they were about to engage, though, the brigand fell to his knees. He had recognized his father and with tears streaming down his face, prostrated himself at his feet. Surrendering his sword, he begged his father for forgiveness.

St. Peter Armengol, repentant and seeking mercy, was filled with shame. Standing before the king with his dad at his side, he appealed to James I for a second chance. Shortly after receiving an official pardon, Peter entered a Mercedarian monastery in Barcelona, becoming known as Friar Peter.

As a Friar, St. Peter offered himself up to save 18 Christian children who were being held hostage by the Moors. He was hung on a tree and his body was left there but he did not die. St. Peter's neck, broken from the hanging, remained in a twisted position the rest of his life. Seven documented miracles were attributed to him while he was still alive.

St. Peter is a good reminder of how greed will seek to enslave us by making us consumed with taking wealth from others. We can even become so enslaved by money that we are willing to take it from those we love most like St. Peter almost did to his own father. Have you ever had a moment when you allowed money or material possessions to so enslave you that it became a higher priority than family, friends or loved ones?

For your prayer

St. Peter would have prayed with Luke 9:22-25. Use your imagination to slowly read Luke 9:22-25. Please reflect on how wealth or material possessions can enslave us and cause us to lose everything so we are called to deny the enslavement of greed.