

2021 October 10

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Wisdom 7.7-11 "I prayed, and understanding was given to me." (7a)

The Psalm: 90, "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love." (14a)

Second: Hebrew 4.12-13, "The word of God is living and active." (12a)

The Gospel: Mark 10.17-30 "Then who can be saved?" (26b)

Let your securities go

The young man was shocked by prospects of forsaking everything to follow Jesus. It is as if you are hanging on something for your life and someone asking you to let go of it; it is like a decision between life and death. The young man, though he was a believer and obeying the precepts of his faith, his trust and reliance was on his huge wealth he had, and Jesus advised him to abandon them and follow himself. Jesus tells him and all to have their total trust in God and not in material wealth. This happens to be the cost of discipleship.

At first site it seems impossible. However, it is doable and within our reach provided we enter the mindset of Jesus. He is not against us having possessions and wealth. He speaks about our priorities, first place always being for God and for his kingdom. Today Wisdom is presented as preferred above all that is desirable on earth: "*I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing compared to her.*" (Wisdom 7.8) Wisdom may be another name for God. This is the treasure Jesus advised the young man in place of his material possessions.

When we think of the worldly possessions in contrast to the above propositions like forsaking everything for the sake of the kingdom, grabbing Wisdom in place of all other desirable possessions, and the word of God, all seem frightening and formidable. All of us have faith in and good feelings for God and wish to go with his design. However, we cannot think of trusting in, and entrusting everything to God: our life, welfare, well-being, future, past, health, wealth, etc. And that is precisely the demand of Jesus. That was precisely what he did to himself. He abandoned not just the material things as the above; he even abandoned his divinity, his heavenly abode with all its cozy comforts, and took upon himself the lowest form of humanity, which was not a desirable option when looking down from heaven.

For abandoning everything or for preferring God to everything else, what we have in return is the promise of Jesus that we would be with him in his kingdom. When Jesus left heaven and came to earth to be born as a weak human person he too had only a promise from the Father that he would be resurrected and that his divinity would be restored to him. Jesus too went through the same uncertainty and doubt all through his life as we humans go through. At the very last moment of life he had the despairing thought that the Father would not save him, that the Father had abandoned him. That was the last cry of Jesus from the cross. (Matthew 27.46) However, he immediately corrected himself by entrusting his life back to the Father before he breathed his last. (Luke 23.46) The faith and trust Jesus demands from us is similar, if not the same. And Jesus knows that we the ordinary humans are not capable of going to the extent Jesus went, and that is OK. Do what we can and leave the rest to the Lord.

Fr. George