

28th Sunday of Ordinary Time B 2021

Wisdom 7:7-11

*I prayed, and prudence was given me;
I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came
to me.*

*I preferred her to scepter and throne,
and 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,*

*and before her, silver is to be accounted
mire.*

*Beyond health and comeliness I loved her,
and I chose to have her rather than the
light,*

*because the splendor of her never yields
to sleep.*

*Yet all good things together came to me in
her company,
and countless riches at her hands.*

Hebrews 4:12-13

*Brothers and sisters:
Indeed the word of God is living and effective,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
penetrating even between soul and spirit,
joints and marrow, and able to discern
reflections and thoughts of the heart.*

*No creature is concealed from him,
but everything is naked and exposed to the
eyes of him to whom we must render an
account.*

Mark 10:17-30

*As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man
ran up, knelt down before him, and asked
him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit
eternal life?"*

*Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me
good? No one is good but God alone.
You know the commandments: You shall not
kill; you shall not commit adultery;
you shall not steal; you shall not bear false
witness; you shall not defraud;*

honor your father and your mother."

*He replied and said to him,
"Teacher, all of these I have observed from
my youth."*

*Jesus, looking at him, loved him and 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, follow me."*

*At that statement his face fell,
and he went away sad, for he had many
possessions.*

*Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,
"How hard it is for those who have wealth to
enter the kingdom of God!"*

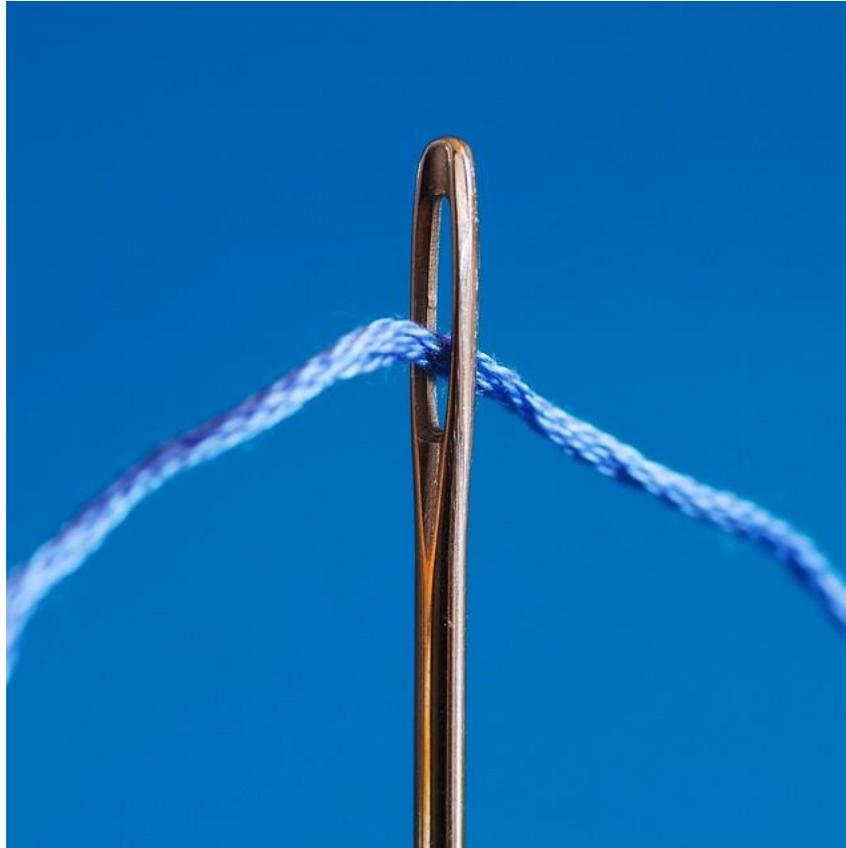
*The disciples were amazed at his words. So
Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children,
how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It
is easier for a camel to pass through the eye
of a needle than for one who is rich to enter
the kingdom of God."*

*They were exceedingly astonished and said
among themselves, "Then who can be
saved?"*

*Jesus looked at them and said, "For human
beings it is impossible, but not for God. All
things are possible for God."*

*Peter began to say to him,
"We have given up everything and followed
you."*

*Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no
one who has given up house or brothers or
sisters or mother or father or children or
lands for my sake and for the sake of the
gospel who will not receive a hundred times
more now in this present age: houses and
brothers and sisters and mothers and children
and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life
in the age to come."*



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Before I continue any further, may I recommend that you take our reading from Wisdom home with you into your personal prayer. It is beautiful. If you take it into your heart, you may find His Divine Presence. I leave it to you... and maybe a future homily.

Today, I reflect on our Gospel according to St. Mark.

*"Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!
It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle
than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."*

Jesus' disciples don't get it. In all their lives the common assumption is that riches are a sign of God's favor and blessing. ⁱ This camel and eye-of-a-needle thing is not only preposterous, but upside down from all they understand.

Accumulation is understood across all societies as a defense against the threats of this world. It is where we develop security. It is how we keep safe and prolong our life, except that by trying to prolong our life, we delude ourselves by forgetting about our mortality.

I don't know how many people in America would think the Hall family affluent. Maybe those homeless in Kalamazoo would say so.

I have a few treasures that I highly prize: my Grampa McMillan's medals from serving in the ambulance corps in World War I, my Dad's medals from serving in the trenches of World War II, and my framed badges from service with KDPS.

I have such an emotional attachment to them that I fantasize how I would rescue them if my house caught on fire. I confess this to you to illustrate how absurd our attachments can be. Even the threat of being consumed in flames doesn't discourage me from meaningless attachments.

I mean: "You can't take it with you."ⁱⁱ And yet we try.

So, what can't you take with you? What can you take with you?

Of course, we can't take any of our possessions with us. That also means we can't take any of the security we thought they offered either. That thrill of eliminating a competitor, that put-down of anybody who threatens our position, or anything that exalts ourselves over others, all those wins: none of that can be taken with us.

I grew up in a family which did not hold financial wealth in high esteem. Achieving excellence and bringing one's talents to fruition were, however. It just seemed more noble. But, can you see how that could develop into, "What a good boy am I"? I can't take that with me, either. That doesn't make it to Heaven.

But what about those things inherent in our seeking God's mercy and love? Love for us Christians goes beyond care and affection. Our understanding of love is represented by a pierced and tortured body on a cross: a love, withholding nothing... all in sacrifice for another, for all others. That is God's gift to us, something we could never earn.

Accepting God's gift in humility inspires us to share the same. Our gratitude for every blessing compels us to sacrifice, to care more about the other's need than our own.

I've often spoke about one of my most poignant memories: the first time I held my newborn child. Awakened in me was, "Oh, Dad... that's how you loved me!" I just wanted to give everything I was to that little bundle.

Can we imagine that that is some small echo akin to the love that our Heavenly Father has for us? Can we conceive that that is something we could take with us to Heaven?

The impossibility of a camel passing through the eye of a needle is a stark reminder to us that we cannot obtain our destiny by our own efforts. It is only when we are brought to

the desperation and hopelessness of our own efforts, that we can humbly turn to our savior and say, “Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Hopefully then, we may find consolation that in God’s mercy *all things are possible*.



ⁱ John R. Donahue, S.J. & Daniel J. Harrington S.J.; *The Gospel of Mark, Sacra Pagina Series Vol. 2*; p.304

ⁱⁱ <https://www.theidioms.com/you-cant-take-it-with-you/>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Prayer