

- **Begin with joke about the priest who was speeding on Sunday morning while going from one church to another.**
- **Comment on Amen rather than applause after hymn by choir or homily**
 - **Applause is a sign that someone had performed well**
 - **Amen is uniting your praise of God with the priest or choir.**

(Begin homily)

This weekend we baptize two small children. From the very beginning of their lives they are privileged to be bathed in the love of God by their parents and families. Although a person can get baptized at any age, it is a common experience to be baptized as an infant. Let's have a show of hands of those who were baptized when very young.

Today's gospel is addressed to you and to me and to all of us who were baptized young. IN my own life,

- **I was baptized shortly after birth,**
- **Raised in a Catholic home**
 - **Rosary most every night**
 - **Mass every Sunday**
 - **Parents went to daily mass during lent**
 - **Perpetual help devotions**
 - **Lived out the commandments**

- Went to Catholic grade school and high school.
- We who were baptized young are much like the man in today's gospel who comes up to Jesus: This story is recorded in three gospels. It is core to Jesus' teaching.
 - He runs up to Jesus, kneels in reverence before him and asks:
 - "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"
 - Jesus answers: "Keep the commandments. Do not steal, kill, commit adultery, covet."
 - The young man responds, "I have done all that since my youth."
- How many of us were baptized when we were young?
- How many of us have lived fairly good lives: Who here has ever killed anyone lately, committed adultery lately!

Then the man says, "I have kept all these from my youth!" But he knows something else is missing in his relationship with God.

Notice the man's question: What must I DO to inherit eternal life?

Jesus says: “You are lacking one thing.” (In Matthew’s gospel he says “If you want to be perfect”). If you want to be great, not just good. He is already good.

“Go, sell all that you have, give it to the poor, (they cannot repay you) and come and follow me.”

He went away sad because he had many possessions.

We want to please God; we have been taught from our youth to do what God wants of us, we want to do what God wants us, but often God is not at the center of our lives.

Ronald Rolheiser says on this point evangelical Christians have it much more than most Catholics. They have come to Jesus.

Evangelicals know Jesus as their Lord and savior. Many other things they don’t get right, but we can learn from them on this point.

It is the difference between Mr. Theresa and ourselves. She gave all away to Jesus. She was so in love with Jesus, so committed to God, that nothing else mattered. We are good, not great. Mr. Therese is not just good, she is great. She accepts the embrace of God then gives up everything and finds fullness.

- (Repeat my early upbringing as a good and faithful Catholic; then add:)
- I entered the seminary.
- In graduate school I was still trying to be perfect but trying to do it on my own, only through my own effort.
- The first step is knowing we can never do it on our own.
- Only when we are accepted and embraced by God's love can we give away what we are holding on to, what is precious to us, what we use to fill in and compensate for the pressures of life, things like:
 - A special alcoholic drink,
 - Inappropriate Sexual activity.
 - Expensive meals
 - clothes

The key question is: Do we really believe in God will supply all we need?

In our daily lives do we go away rejoicing in the Lord,

Or do we go away sad as the young man did?

(Tell of the release of my anxiety in the classroom that day)

First step: knowing that I am loved and forgiven by the Lord just as I am with all my warts and wrinkles.

Second step, spending a lifetime of accepting God's gracious gift and trusting in God's mercy. It changes the motive for doing what we do. It makes us an ambassador for God.

It is not about us; It is about God and understanding his all embracing love for all creation.

Realizing how much God loves us through his son Jesus helps us to understand much of what Jesus has told us in the gospels.

- (Reflect on the story of the owner of the vineyard who goes out during different days to hire people to work for him yet pays all of them the same amount for their labor as an example of God's generosity.)**
- Recall the quote of Jesus how God rains on the just and unjust; on the weeds and the wheat.**

My brothers and sister, let me conclude by saying it this way: until we accept the mercy of God, we have not experienced everlasting life.

And until we extend the mercy of God to others, we have not known the embrace of God.

