

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

As the years go by, we all make crucial choices and massive changes. What is important is to see them in perspective and to make choices which lead us closer to God.

Today's Readings

Wisdom 7:7-11

Prayer leads to wisdom, which is far more important than all created things.

Hebrews 4:12-13

No created thing is hidden from God.

Mark 10:17-30

People who leave everything to follow Jesus will receive far more than they gave up in the first place.



Reflection

A rich man approached Jesus and asked what he's got to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him that the answer to keep the Mosaic Law, a reflection of God's righteousness. The man answered that he'd always kept the law all his life.

Jesus then invited him to take a further step on his spiritual journey. By giving away his wealth to the poor, the man would be rewarded with even greater treasures in heaven. But the rich man was unable to part with his possessions. Saddened, he departed. Jesus warned his disciples that wealth could be an

obstacle to the kingdom of God. Jesus' followers should not be so weighed down with material goods that they were unable to pass through heaven's gate.



The rich young man in today's Gospel wanted to be **assured** of salvation. He was a good man, an observant Jew and someone Jesus looked on with love. But he was hoping that keeping the law would save him. He wanted to be sure of gaining heaven by jumping through the right hoops, at the right time, for the right reasons.

Jesus certainly doesn't reject the importance of faithful and good living, but he offers the young man **a relationship** that would make sense of the choices involved in following him. Without a loving **relationship** with God, who calls us to live the best life we can, to the best of our abilities, the fulfilment of any law, civil or moral, is a tyranny. We do not believe in a tyrannical God.

We do believe, however, in a God who makes demands of us, who often challenges us in the places where we are most vulnerable. For the young man, his money was the obstacle. He couldn't embrace a relationship with Jesus because this would have placed his wealth in peril and jeopardised the comfort that his many possessions afforded him.

For the early Christian community, today's Gospel highlights serious issues; some people had left the community because of things like this (the role of the law in following Christ; the divide between rich and poor; the commitment demanded of followers of Jesus in the early community. Compared with our ancestors in the faith, we've rather tamed this radical edge to the Gospel.

We often comfort ourselves by thinking that we keep the law and that will save us, but Jesus tells us that salvation comes from a loving relationship with him, shown even to the sacrifice of our lives. If any law enables us to deepen this relationship with Jesus and serve his people, then that law is helpful and good; but if a civil or religious law gets in the way, then its moral authority over us is very questionable.

In a world where the vast majority of the world's wealth and resources are held and used by a predominantly white, educated, and, at least nominally, Christian first world, then the demands of today's Gospel should be as challenging to us as they were to the rich young man. "There is one thing you lack."

It seems to suit us to move away from this financially hard teaching of Jesus. The **law** and **money** are in themselves neutral things. They can be used for good and they can be used for evil.

At their worst, the law and money seduce us into pride, greed, and power.

At their best, the law and money can serve the liberation of everyone and enable our world to better reflect the kingdom of dignity, justice, and equality Jesus taught and lived.

Given that all things are possible for God, let's pray that we stop taming the gospel but allow it to lead us more deeply into a relationship with Jesus, who looks on us, loves us, and calls us to write the law of love on our hearts in such a way that our lives will be good news to everyone.

With God anything is possible.

GOSPEL WORDSEARCH

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THE NOVENA is back!



The Novena in honour of St Anthony started immediately, after his death. This novena is made on **nine Tuesdays in succession**. It is a laudable custom at the beginning of the novena to make your intention for he Novena and to mae a good resolution to practice some of the virtues in which St Anthony most excelled – purity, humility, patience, obedience, and so on.

The Novena (with Holy Mass) is every Tuesday at 12.15pm.

You can begin the Nine Tuesdays any week.