

Praying the Sunday Gospel

28B

October 10, 2021

Mark 10:17-30

Background on the Gospel

One of the many possible themes running through all three Scriptures is “being discerned by God.” Usually we speak about *our* discernment of God’s will/plan/desire for us; in such an approach we are in the “driver’s seat” and in full control of how open we will be to the call of God. But the three readings for this week-end suggest that ultimately God discerns us: He sees through to the heart and knows our true sincerity and genuine openness. He can recognize when we are duplicitous and unwilling to risk everything for Him.

The passage from Wisdom 7 is theoretically a prayer of King Solomon (David’s son and successor) who famously asked not for success or external wealth/victory, etc. but sought an understanding heart that he would be able to judge wisely. The passage from the continuous reading of Hebrews 4 just happens to be an excellent complement to the other readings and their message on discernment: God’s Word cuts like a two-edged sword, through to the heart, challenging us to radical and total honesty.

Today’s very well-known Gospel is the story of the “rich man” who is searching for more “meaning” in his life; he realized that keeping commandments is not enough. He is “half-way” to the Lord and risks asking Jesus’ advice. Jesus looking at him with love, invites him to sell all he has and follow Him, a challenge he is unwilling to accept. He goes away sad. Jesus discerned his heart and saw the stumbling block – his possessions. But the rich man wanted it both ways. This Gospel is a dynamic text that challenges us and invites us to ever deeper conversion. We are the “rich man.”

For reflection, discussion and prayer

- 1) *The rich man could be any one of us: we are greatly blessed and using our talents and serving God generously – yet – we still feel some restlessness and wonder what more could/should we do? What might the Lord be asking of me at this time?*
 - ... Letting go of the titles and/or recognition?
 - ... Letting go of personal perfectionism?
 - ... Associating with people who are marginalized?

- 2) *This Gospel used to be read/interpreted as two levels of Christian living – the “base line” of obeying commandments or the “higher calling” of letting go of all possessions and earthly titles. Since Vatican II, the passage is seen in a new way: There is only one call and it is for all disciples. All are called to set aside any unnecessary earthly attachments. Pray over your own call to human poverty for the sake of openness to a divine gift.*

- 3) *Meditate on the Lord looking at you with love. What does it feel like to have His undivided attention? Is such “undivided attention” what He wants from us as the most fitting response to His love?
... Ask forgiveness for times and ways you may have ignored His invitation.*
- 4) *Following the Lord means being associated with all others who follow Him. Am I comfortable with being part of such and “imperfect” crowd?*