

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time



In recovery, we hear the phrase “let go and let God” to suggest relinquishing control of the things that control us. In addition to material possessions, we are to also let go of our behavior patterns, attitudes, and expectations. This is much easier said than done, especially considering the mental obsessions commonly associated with lust addiction, sexual compulsions, and other unhealthy attachments. We have been conditioned to cope with an unpredictable world around us and our experience with darkness may be the result of getting our short-term needs met in the only way we knew how.

God offers us another route and an escape from the dungeon of these obsessions. We may not always like the direction He provides, but we gain confidence in the journey by finding support and fellowship among those who have walked a similar path. We center our open discussions around Scripture so that it may transform us while helping us make sense of things.

This Sunday’s second reading from the Letter to the Hebrews describes what takes place when we refer to Scripture to discern the movement inside of us:

*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.*

God offers new life and can heal our condition or circumstances when we put aside our old coping mechanisms and intentionally seek Him. When we open our eyes and ears, we may see and hear our story being told in a variety of ways. To the extent that we can set aside our own expectations and ideas of how things ought to go, we will find answers.

This Sunday’s Gospel reading shares an account of a rich man asking Jesus how he can inherit eternal life. Having observed God’s commandments since a young boy, the question seems genuine. Mark’s gospel continues:

*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 speaks directly to the spiritual condition of the rich man in this story. While we do not know of his destiny, we know he went away sad. We may feel the same way when we consider what God asks of us, especially when the things we are asked to let go of serve us in some way (but have grave consequences). The point is that we are to let God serve us in ways that our limited human resources cannot.

Jesus summarizes this as He debriefs with His disciples, first noting, “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.” The disciples are amazed at this teaching and ask a similar question we may be asking ourselves:

“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.”

Reflection Questions

- Consider how lustful behaviors, attitudes, and expectations have served you in the past. How might you seek God to have these same needs met? What are your needs?
- How do you hear and discern the will of God?
- How do you find the strength and willingness to do His will?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Wisdom 7:7-11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17

Second Reading: Hebrews 4:12-13

Gospel: Mark 10:17-30