

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

October 13, 2018

Gospel: (Mark 10: 17-30)

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

Reflection:

In reply to the man's profession that he has kept the commandments, Jesus lovingly says to him, "You are lacking in *one* thing." This suggests that, flowing from an undivided heart, dispossessing oneself and following Jesus are *one and the same thing*. To turn this around: if one is to follow Jesus one must come empty-handed. This doesn't mean that we *literally* sell everything; we all have family and social obligations that make having things a necessity. Jesus is saying that we can't let possessions (or anything else, for that matter) divide our hearts. Too often possessions possess us; we must let go so only God can possess us. It is hard to enter the kingdom of God because too often our hearts are divided—we want to let go and follow Jesus at the same time we want to hang onto our possessions and, indeed our very lives! Divided hearts just won't do. God wants our all so God can give all in return. (Living Liturgy, p. 224)

Vincenzian Meditation:

"Did the young man tend to rely too much on negative goodness? He had not broken the commandments, but how much good had he done for others? Was Our Lord saying to him: "With all your possessions, with all your wealth, with all that you could give away, what positive good have you done to others? Have you gone out of your way to help and comfort and strengthen others as you might have done?" Perhaps Our Lord was saying to him: "Stop looking at goodness as consisting in *not* doing things. Take yourself: take all that you have and spend yourself and your possessions on others. Then you will find true happiness in time and in eternity." (McCullen, *Deep Down Things*, p. 715)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

What "possessions"—time, money, talent—are you called to give to the poor?

Closing Prayer:

For the grace to let go of my possessions,

-God of mercy, hear my prayer.

For the grace to have an undivided heart,

-God of mercy, hear my prayer. Amen

