

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, October 14, 2018

The Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

HARD NOT EASY

How easy it is for those who have wealth to get their children into Ivy League schools.

How easy it is for those who have wealth to secure the finest medical treatment.

How easy it is for those who have wealth to get their phone calls returned by the mayor, the governor, and the local pastor.

How easy it is for those who have wealth to get a table at the number one restaurant in town.

Having wealth seems to make things easy and to open doors that otherwise would be closed.

However, having wealth does not always make things easy.

In Sunday's Gospel (Mark 10:17-30), a rich man comes up to Jesus and asks, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus tells him to keep the commandments.

When the man assures Jesus that he has been keeping God's commandments from his youth, Jesus challenges him to take the next step in his spiritual journey.

"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."

But the rich man declines that invitation. As he walks away, Jesus remarks, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God....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."

Wealth had undoubtedly made the man's life easy in many ways, but it did not make it easy as he considered the words of Jesus. All he could see was what he would be losing. He did not consider the "treasure in heaven" that Jesus was promising to be more valuable than the silver and gold he could hold in his hands.

That wealthy man lacked the wisdom to discern what was truly important. He did not have the wisdom mentioned in this Sunday's First Reading (Wisdom 7:7-11). There King Solomon recognized that wisdom was more important than anything else.

"I preferred her to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her...because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand, and before her, silver is to be accounted mire."

Without wisdom we can, like the man of the Gospel, place a higher value on money, wealth, and material possessions than we do on our relationship with Christ.

While Jesus is most likely not asking us to sell all we have and give to the poor, he is certainly asking us to follow him more closely.

Doing so will likely involve our being more generous in giving of our time, our talent, and our treasure to help others. It will require valuing our spiritual health more highly than our financial health.

While wealth, money, and possessions can make things easier in this life, they can make things harder in our journey to eternal life. Just ask the rich man in this Sunday's Gospel.

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