28th Ordinary Sunday - 10 October 2021

Anthony Doran

Follow this and additional works at: https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy

Part of the Catholic Studies Commons, and the Liturgy and Worship Commons

Recommended Citation
Introduction

Today’s Mass invites us to consider what gets in the way of us responding to the call and challenge of discipleship. Family, power, prestige, wealth can all be barriers in our pathway following the risen Jesus. Do we stumble and trip over these hurdles? Or are we able to see our way clear?

Penitential Act

Use one of the Roman Missal texts or this optional litany form:
Lord Jesus, you teach us how to have treasure in heaven. Lord, have mercy.
You call us to follow you. Christ, have mercy.
You draw us into the kingdom of God. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Wisdom 7:7-11
This reading is a meditation on the value of God’s wisdom: more to be esteemed that earthly power; more valuable than all of the world’s riches, loved more than physical health or beauty.

Second Reading

Hebrews 4:12-13
Today’s reading has the striking image of God’s word as a double-edged sword: probing more deeply into our souls than anything else. Can we open ourselves to let the word of God enter our hearts and minds?

Gospel Reading

Mark 10:17-30
Today’s Gospel Reading is an urgent reminder that our pathway to the Kingdom of Heaven is much easier for us if we are whole-heartedly free from anything and everything which might get in the way of our response, be that riches, be that family, be that power or prestige.
Reflection

If you watch TV, or read the newspapers, or go to the cinemas, or look at magazines, you will know that the wisdom of the world is that money equals success. Look at the ads for prestige products – be they cars or clothes or food – and the swisher the ad, the more expensive the product. And if you can afford these products, you have made it. Even more so, if you actually buy these products, you are a winner. If you have money, and lots of it, you are ok. And the wisdom of world tries to tell us that the converse is true. That if you are not wealthy, you are a failure. No good in the eyes of the world.

How different to the wisdom of God? For the wisdom of God gives us a different story. We see this in today's first reading. The book of Wisdom is one of the last books of the Old Testament to be written. Scholars think that it was probably written in the period spanning thirty years either side of the birth of Jesus. And it was not written in Israel, either. The book of Wisdom is thought to have come from Alexandria in Egypt. By this stage in history, Egypt in general, and Alexandria in particular, were centres for Hellenistic or Greek culture and thought. And in this centre of Hellenistic thought, Jewish thought flourished as well. Confronted by the challenges posed by the overwhelming Hellenistic culture, the Jewish community reflected on their own experience of God to see how they might respond to the world in which they found themselves.

Unlike other Jewish communities who had produced various books of the Bible, the Jews of Alexandria were not slaves and they were not exiles. The Jewish community who produced this book formed a major political, economic, and intellectual force in Alexandria. This community included craftsmen, weavers, papermakers, goldsmiths, potters and traders. So, this community knew about the value of priceless stones and gold and silver. They knew about light and radiance and beauty.

And knowing all these things, they also knew that the Wisdom of God was more precious than any earthly riches. Compared with the Wisdom of God, precious stones and gold and silver are as valuable as a pinch of sand, as precious as mud.

That is what makes the cry of the man who runs up to Jesus so poignant. His question to Jesus, “Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” is the question which many of us carry in our hearts, too. We can hear the longing, the yearning of this young man for salvation. Jesus’ answer to this man is perhaps surprising. For Jesus tells him that the way to eternal life is to be found in keeping the commandments. So often, Jesus castigates those who keep the letter of the law and fail to observe the spirit.

And the man replies, “Master, I have kept all of these from my earliest days.” This answer is perhaps not as full of pride as it might sound. It might be that the man has indeed kept all of the commandments from his earliest days but senses the incompleteness of them. Senses that there must be something more.

Suddenly, it seems, there is a change, “Jesus looks steadily at him and loved him.” In this man, Jesus sees one of the just ones of Israel, moulded by centuries of
observance of the law, who has the makings of a disciple. Jesus looks steadily at him and loved him.

Jesus offers one more challenge to the man, “Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

But here, sadly, our story falters. For on hearing these words of Jesus, the man’s face fell, and he goes away sad, for he was a rich man.

The fact that the man goes away sad, his eyes downcast, is an indication that, unlike others who asked Jesus questions to trap him or trick him, this man was sincere. He really was seeking eternal life.

The point at issue here is not the accumulation of riches. But rather what it means to follow Jesus. This expression, ‘to follow’ describes discipleship of Jesus. It demands that we prefer him over everything, that we accompany him without looking back, free from all attachments.

We all know how difficult, even impossible, it is to be really detached from the things which we possess, even if it is very little. Jesus’ word, though, reaches further, “For men, it is impossible, but not for God, because everything is possible for God.”

Eternal life, salvation is a gift from God. God is the only one who saves. The wisdom of the world, be it manifested in riches or other things to which we are attached or addicted, is not the way to salvation. It is only the wisdom of God which saves us. A wisdom which teaches us that the way to life lies in a shameful death.

If we were to read on a bit further in Mark’s Gospel, we would hear the second prediction of the Passion of Jesus. We heard the first prediction of the Passion three weeks ago. These predictions of the Passion provide the framework for the Gospels for the last two Sundays. The way of Christ is the way of the Cross.

This is the true meaning of the demands, often radical, of the Gospel. They are not arbitrary.

Jesus comes to turn our human lives towards God’s will. Human life which he himself made holy by sharing in it. And those who follow him, free from earthly attachments, will receive eternal life in the world to come, and in this present time, a hundredfold of all that they have left behind.
Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction
In the psalm today we are urged to know the shortness of our lives and so gain wisdom of heart. We present our needs to God knowing that everything matters to God even in our shortness of life.

Petitions
We pray for the leaders of our Australian Church and all Plenary Council members as they draw the first Council meeting to an end. We pray that their work, and that of their support team, will continue to be fruitful over the coming months until it concludes next year.
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all Christians; that we may not be solely concerned with the riches of this world, but the riches of the next, and in that way gain wisdom of heart.
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who have left everything for Christ; may they be strengthened in their pursuit of Christ, as we support them in prayer.
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are suffering, especially those suffering the injustice of war; may they find joy and peace in the Kingdom of Heaven.
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are suffering from the pandemic. May they come to know that Christ is with them through the compassion and support of those around them.
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who struggle to find a life balance between the pursuit of riches and the need to be wise in their relationships. Give them the grace to understand what is important for eternal life.
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who build our cities and towns. May they seek to provide what is necessary for people to live in supportive communities as we deepen our knowledge through our response to the pandemic.
(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

Conclusion
Acknowledging that our true wealth is in heaven, we bring these prayers before our Father, through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen.
Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA
Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 444
Forth in the peace of Christ we go. J. Quinn SJ. 495
Here I am, Lord. D. Schutte. 496
Lord to whom shall we go? M. Herry. 189
O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts. 459
Restless is the heart. B. Farrell. 239
Seek, O seek the Lord. J. McAuley/ R. Connolly. 211
Seek ye first. K. Lafferty, 456
The hound of heaven. C. Willcock SJ. 81
The summons. J. Bell. 502
This day God gives me. J. Quinn SJ. 536

AOV1
All that is hidden. B. Farrell. 127
Here I am, Lord. D. Schutte. 496
Lord to whom shall we go? M. Herry. 6
O God, our help in ages past. I. Wats. 175
Seek ye first. K. Lafferty. 48.

AOV2
Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 170
How rich are the depths of God. C. Willcock SJ. 79

AOVNG
Come and follow me. Tom Franzak. 25
Will you come and follow me/The summons. Graham Maule and John L. Bell. 149

CWB
Lord, be my vision. Tr. Mary E. Byrne and Eleanor Henrietta Hull. 733

CWBII
Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions
Be thou my vision. Trans. Mary Byrne, versified Eleanor Hull. 455
The hound of Heaven. The Grail. 505
Word of God, come down on earth. James Quinn SJ. 644
The summons. John L. Bell and Graham Maule. 645
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Karen Lafferty. 594

S&S1
The summons. John L. Bell. 137

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy
Psalm 89: Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!
Psalm 89: Roger Heagney. CWB 431
Psalm 90: Fill us with your love, O Lord: Rosalie Bonighton. GA 51
Psalm 90 (89): Jenny O’Brien. JOBB pg. 98
Fill us with your love, O Lord: Marty Haugen. LPB pg. 163