

## PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS

9 – 10 OCTOBER 2021

## TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (B)

### SUNDAY REFLECTION

Generally speaking, in the Jewish tradition both wealth and well-being were regarded as signs of God's favor. It is against this background that Jesus proposes a new morality: wealth can come between a person and God. Salvation is a gift from God, and with God, everything is possible.

We live today in a society that has a lot in common with the Jewish society of the first century. Success is measured in terms of economic growth and security. Our society rewards the rich with more riches. Those who are powerless and penniless count for nothing.

We become what we are devoted to. Our true identity is revealed in the shape of those we admire. The gospel asks us to look critically at our circumstances. If our identity is hooked to what we possess, who are we when our possessions are taken from us? We are afraid that if we have nothing, we are nothing. Like the rich young man in today's gospel, attachment to our possessions can soon lead to our being possessed by our attachments. The tail is then wagging the dog.

Jesus wants us to enjoy our inner independence, so that we are not dependent on what we have. His disciples are identified by their relationship with Him and their relationship with their neighbors. In the story of the rich young man, Jesus teaches in parable form that material possessions are merely means to an end, not the end in themselves. The sadness of the rich young man lies in the fact that he lacked the wisdom extolled in our First Reading: the author 'reckoned no priceless stone to be Wisdom's peer for, compared with her, all gold is a pinch of sand.'

**STEWARDSHIP:** In today's Gospel, Jesus asks the rich young man to give away all that he has in order to have treasure in heaven. But he is unable to free himself from his possessions, and so he goes sadly away. Does what I own keep me from following Jesus?

### READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY

17 OCT '21

**Is. 53:10-11:** The Lord calls us to commit ourselves to Him. While that might involve suffering, there is the promise of joy to come.

**Heb. 4:14-16:** In following Jesus, Christians follow someone who, like them, has experienced the difficulties and hardships of life. We can be comforted that He is merciful.

**Mk. 10:35-45:** Jesus is a different leader – rather than seeking glory, He seeks to be a servant and to sacrifice His life to save others.

### THE MASS

#### The purposes of the Mass

What else should you do, besides having a lot of faith, if you want to attend Holy Mass well? You should identify yourself with Christ. You should remember the Scriptures and have "the same mind" "that He had on the cross (Phil. 2:5). The same mind which means the same

purposes. What purposes did Jesus have on the cross? What was He concerned about? We can sum up His ends or purposes as four: to give glory to God the Father; to thank Him; to make up for the sins of men; and to ask Him for graces for us. If each time you go to Mass, you try to live at least one of these four purposes, you will attend Holy Mass well.

### **The first purpose: Adoration**

God is our Creator. He is the Lord of the whole world. We depend on Him for everything. He is infinite, eternal, all-powerful. His infinite greatness and goodness ought to fill us with amazement and enthusiasm. When people get enthused about God, they want to praise Him, they want to adore Him. Jesus Christ, with His humanity, gave perfect glory to God the Father from the cross, and He continues to do so from the altar. If you unite yourself to Him, you will be offering a perfect sacrifice of adoration and praise. Pay special attention to the *Gloria* and the *Sanctus*.

### **The second purpose: To Give Thanks**

God is infinitely good. And all the good things we have, have come from Him: life, family, sanctifying grace, faith, the sacraments, the gift of His Mother... And so many other natural and supernatural gifts. It is good to give thanks. The person who is too proud to say "Thank You" is not only ungrateful but is bound to end up being unhappy. Unite yourself to our Lord in the Mass, giving thanks, and you will see how you also become more optimistic as a result, because you will become more and more convinced of the goodness of God.

### **The third purpose: To Make Up for Our Sins**

Jesus is perfect God and perfect Man. He is all-holy. Therefore He has not and could not have been guilty of any sin. But, as the Holy Scriptures say, He took our sins on Himself and made up for them. He did penance for us by dying on the cross. If we want to take part properly in the Holy Mass, we must be sorry for our sins. The person who is not sorry for his sins will never understand or love the Mass, nor will he ever really take part in it. But the person who comes to Mass with real sorrow for his sins, will draw from it great strength to fight against temptations and to realize that, despite his weaknesses, God loves him very much. The penitential act the "I confess" that we all say together at the start of the Mass does not pardon mortal sins. Forgiveness of mortal sins has to be obtained in the sacrament of penance. It is also important to remember that a person who has committed a mortal sin cannot go to communion unless he goes to confession beforehand. But the penitential act, if it is said well, certainly helps to obtain pardon for present venial sins as well as to stir up new sorrow for past sins that have already been forgiven. In this way it helps us to purify ourselves and so to take better part in the Holy Mass.

### **The fourth purpose: Petition**

Our God is a merciful and a very generous God. He longs to give. He wants to give us what is absolutely the best, what is the greatest gift imaginable: eternal life and all the help we need to make it ours. God wants to give. But He also wants to be asked: "Ask and you shall receive." That is why we ask with a prayer for petition. However, it is wise, when asking, to be able to back up our petition with some proof of special merit on our part. This is where we seem to

run into a big difficulty. For when we look at ourselves, we see ourselves so full of defects and so lacking in merits that there seems to be no reason why God should ever heed our petitions. That is why we look to the merits of Christ, and to those of our Lady and the saints. That is why, if we are sensible, we unite our prayer to the prayer of Christ.

Christ's prayer is always effective because it is simply impossible that God the Father should not listen to the prayer of His beloved Son. Jesus prayed for us on the cross. He continues praying for us on the altar. When we pray in the Holy Mass, therefore, and unite our prayers to that of Jesus, we can be sure that our requests will be heard by God the Father.

Next week we begin an oversight of the parts of the Mass.

## **THE ROSARY AND THE LITURGICAL YEAR**

The Rosary had its origin in the liturgical mentality of former ages. Even at the present time it is called "Mary's Psalter." There still are Catholics who consider the 150 Hail Marys a substitute for the 150 psalms for those persons who neither have the time, the education, nor the opportunity to pray the Hours of the Divine Office. Thus "Mary's Psalter" is a shortened, simplified "breviary" — alongside the common Hour-prayer of the Church. — *The Church's Year of Grace*, Dr. Pius Parsch

The Rosary is Christocentric setting forth the entire life of Jesus Christ, the passion, death, resurrection and glory. Of course, the Rosary honors and contemplates Mary too, and rightly so, for the same reason that the Liturgical Year does likewise: "Because of the mission she received from God, her life is most closely linked with the mysteries of Jesus Christ, and there is no one who has followed in the footsteps of the Incarnate Word more closely and with more merit than she"<sup>142</sup> (*Mediator Dei*). Meditation on this cycle of Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries makes the Rosary not only "a breviary or summary of the Gospel and of Christian life," (*Ingravescentibus malis*) but also a compendium of the Liturgical Year. Therewith the Rosary stands revealed as a dynamic teacher and nurturer of Christian faith, morality, and spiritual perfection, fostering in various ways faith, hope, charity, and the other virtues, and mediating special graces, all to the end that we may become more and more like unto Christ. — *Mariology*, Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M.

## **The Rosary and the Popes**

No form of extra-liturgical devotion to Mary is more widely practiced among the faithful or found by them to be more satisfyingly complete than the Rosary, which has come to be regarded as the very badge of Catholic piety. No form of extra-liturgical devotion to Mary has been recommended more warmly or frequently by the Popes. With perhaps two exceptions, all the Sovereign Pontiffs from Sixtus IV in 1478 down to John XXIII, especially Leo XIII (in 23 documents, ten of them encyclicals entirely on the Rosary) and his successors, have extolled this form of prayer, which has been the favorite, moreover, of such saints as Teresa of Avila, Francis de Sales, Louis de Montfort, Alphonsus Liguori, Don Bosco, Bernadette, and many more.

The authentic Rosary is a happy combination of vocal and mental prayer, each of which is essential to the devotion. It is incorrect to say that meditation is "the very essence of the

Rosary devotion," for vocal recitation of the prayers is also of the essence. Meditation is, of course, the nobler element, the "soul," while vocal prayer is the "body" of the devotion. The Rosary, Pope Leo XIII declared, "is composed of two parts, distinct but inseparable — the meditation on the mysteries and the recitation of the prayers. It is thus a kind of prayer that requires not only some raising of the soul to God, but also a particular and explicit attention" (*Incunda semper*). Hence, as Pope Pius XI stated, they err "who consider this devotion merely a boresome formula repeated with monotonous and singsong intonation" (*Ingravescentibus malis*). Moreover, as Pius XI put it, "both piety and love, although always breathing forth the same words, do not, however, repeat the same thing, but they fervently express something ever new which the loving heart always sends forth." And finally, in the words of Pius XII, "the recitation of identical formulas, repeated so many times, rather than rendering the prayer sterile and boring, has on the contrary the admirable quality of infusing confidence in him who prays, and brings to bear a gentle compulsion on the motherly heart of Mary (*Ingravescentibus malis*). — *Mariology*, Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M.

Pope Benedict XVI in an address at the Basilica of St. Mary Major where he prayed the rosary with the faithful said:

Today, together we confirm that the Holy Rosary is not a pious practice banished to the past, like prayers of other times thought of with nostalgia. Instead, the Rosary is experiencing a new Springtime. Without a doubt, this is one of the most eloquent signs of love that the young generation nourish for Jesus and his Mother, Mary. In the current world, so dispersive, this prayer helps to put Christ at the center, as the Virgin did, who meditated within all that was said about her Son, and also what he did and said. When reciting the Rosary, the important and meaningful moments of salvation history are relived. The various steps of Christ's mission are traced. With Mary the heart is oriented toward the mystery of Jesus. Christ is put at the center of our life, of our time, of our city, through the contemplation and meditation of his holy mysteries of joy, light, sorrow and glory. May Mary help us to welcome within ourselves the grace emanating from these mysteries, so that through us we can "water" society, beginning with our daily relationships, and purifying them from so many negative forces, thus opening them to the newness of God. The Rosary, when it is prayed in an authentic way, not mechanical and superficial but profoundly, it brings, in fact, peace and reconciliation. It contains within itself the healing power of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, invoked with faith and love at the center of each "Hail Mary".

## PRAYERS

Lord, we thank you for the deep relationships we have entered into through your grace - with one of our children, a spouse, an intimate friend, a leader - the kind of relationship that has given a new quality to our lives. People sometimes think they can run and kneel before someone and say "*You are a good person; what must I do to have a deep relationship with you?*"

But as we know, it cannot happen like that; it isn't a matter of someone being good, because only God is good; not of learning off by heart a list of things to do.

Something is still lacking:

to experience that someone is looking deep into our souls and loving us,  
to feel that we could sell everything we own and distribute the money to the poor,  
because nothing in the whole world is more important than being with that person.  
Of course, many people's faces fall at this point,  
because they have things which they cannot let go,  
and so they go away sad, with a sadness that nothing will ever cure.

A modern poet once said,

*"Traveler, there is no path: paths are made by walking."*

Lord, forgive us that we use the commandments as an excuse  
for not stepping out in faith.