



Bringing Home the Word



Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, October 11, 2015

To Do: Relationships

By Janel Esker

While on maternity leave I learned some difficult lessons, including how to handle explosive diapers and how to convince a bright-eyed baby that 3 AM isn't really "morning."

But my toughest lesson was discovering that my to-do lists were no longer important. As someone who thrives on accomplishing things, I was shocked to realize I could only get one or two things done each day while feeding, soothing, and diapering my daughter. It took me months to understand that the to-do lists that had been central to my life had become a distraction from my life's new center—my daughter and her unique coos, kicks and, yes, cries.

Jesus doesn't condemn the rich man's wealth in today's Gospel reading. But

his saying that "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" reminds us that wealth can distract us from recognizing our dependence on God. Just like my lists, the activity and sense of accomplishment that managing wealth provides can lead us to set poor priorities and move away from others.

We may not imagine ourselves as wealthy even though we're richer than most of the world if we have a roof and three daily meals. Whether we farm or sew or shop, whether we rent or own our home, no matter how many credit cards or bank accounts are in our name, we are called to devote time to our relationship with God and to value it more than any material or worldly good.

Maybe we, too, have some hard lessons to learn about what is truly central to our lives—and what is mere distraction. †

Sunday Readings

Wisdom 7:7-11

"All gold, in view of [wisdom], is a little sand..."

Hebrews 4:12-13

"Everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account."

Mark 10:17-30

"You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor...."

A Word From Pope Francis

Don't accumulate! Don't accumulate money, don't accumulate vanity, don't accumulate pride, power! These treasures serve no purpose! ...If your treasure is in wealth, in vanity, in power or in pride, your heart will be chained there, your heart will be a slave to wealth, to vanity, to pride."

—Morning Meditation, June 20, 2014



PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for your gentle reminders of what is important in life. Help me to let go of anything that blocks the flow of love from my heart to my sisters and brothers.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

The “\$ale-vation” of Our Souls: Are We Possessed by Our Possessions?

By Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR

An economics textbook I used in college noted that money captivates people. It is the only commodity that has no value in and of itself—it will not feed, clothe, shelter, or entertain us. It has value only when we use it.

In a San Antonio cemetery rests the widow of a Texas oil tycoon. She requested burial in a lace nightgown and in her Ferrari, “with the seat slanted comfortably.” The Superior Court of Los Angeles found the request unusual though not illegal, so the cost of shipping the car to Texas was deducted from her vast estate. The image of a hearse towing a Ferrari may have given onlookers fleeting hope: “Maybe you really *can* take it with you!”

The wise, stammering old Benedictine monk in the best-selling book *Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul* by Tony Hendra says, “P-p-possessions are extensions of the self, you see... The more possessions, the less likely will be your release from the p-p-prison. In our community, property is forbidden because it gets in the way of love and trust between its members. If every



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- How attached am I to my possessions?
- How do I serve the poor with my time, talent, and treasure?

man had his own private property, the community would just be a collection of individual p-p-prisons, wouldn't it?"

Have we become prisoners to our television, Internet connection, cell phone, car, or mortgage? The Christian

community knows detachment from material possessions is true freedom. But the blessings of labor and earnings and the God-given joy derived from our property are also good and real.

Then why did Christ freely adopt poverty and simplicity? Christ associated with the rich, but his message called them to use their means for a greater end. He does not condemn the mere possession of wealth but rather selfishness and neglect of those in need.

Christ commands us to love God and others with our heart, soul, mind, and strength; that this would include our pocketbooks is implied. Love of God and others becomes two sides of the same coin, for “if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us” (1 John 4:12). Those who adhere to Christ’s commandment of love “are not far from the kingdom of God” (Mark 12:34). Conversely, love of mammon over God takes us away from the reign of God, as demonstrated by the young man who “went away sad, for he had many possessions” (Mark 10:22).

Dear God, in the event that you aren't laughing on Judgment Day when we attempt to take our money and possessions with us, can we at least redeem our frequent-flyer miles to get out of p-p-purgatory?

Fr. Byron Miller is the president of Liguori Publications.

WEEKDAY READINGS October 12–17

Mon. Weekday: Romans 1:1–7 / Luke 11:29–32

Tue. Weekday: Romans 1:16–25 / Luke 11:37–41

Wed. Weekday: Romans 2:1–11 / Luke 11:42–46

Thu. St. Teresa of the Child Jesus:

Romans 3:21–30 / Luke 11:47–54

Fri. Weekday: Romans 4:1–8 / Luke 12:1–7

Sat. St. Ignatius of Antioch:

Romans 4:13, 16–18 / Luke 12:8–12