

## 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

### GOSPEL

Jerusalem Bible © 1966 by Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Company Inc.

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days.' Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, 'There is one thing you lack. 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 his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them 'how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' They were more astonished than ever. 'In that case' they said to one another 'who can be saved?' Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he said 'it is impossible, but not for God: because everything is possible for God.'

Peter took this up. 'What about us?' he asked him. 'We have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'I tell you solemnly, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not be repaid a hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land – not without persecutions – now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life.'

(Mark 10:17-30)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- Jesus is again quoting from the Torah or Law, this time the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:7-17, Deuteronomy 5:11-21) also known as the Decalogue. The commandments are a blueprint for how Israel must live in righteousness in order to be God's people.
- At the time of Jesus, being a wealthy person was seen as a sign of God's favour, a reward for being a righteous person. Jesus' teaching here is a challenge to that attitude.
- In the early Church, it was the practice that wealth and goods were shared in common (Acts 2:44-47). No one should be in need.
- The Church upholds the right to own private property, but this right comes with a responsibility to share our wealth with those who do not have the basic necessities of life.

### EXPLORING THE WORD

As we saw last week, the major themes of 'being receptive' and 'being of service' have emerged. In this gospel, Jesus challenges attitudes about the right ordering of possessions. Clearly the young man who approaches Jesus is a good man. He has sincerely tried to follow the law of God as laid down in the Ten Commandments, and for this Jesus loves him. But more is demanded of a disciple. Jesus recognises that there is something in this young man that hinders his receptivity to the fullness of the kingdom, and that is his wealth. Jesus is not saying that to have wealth is a bad thing in and of itself. But true discipleship entails casting off all pretensions to wealth and power for the sake of something far more precious. Indeed, if the desire to retain wealth and social standing is more important to us than the attainment of the kingdom, there is no hope. Discipleship entails the emptying of oneself for others. Salvation is impossible for those who are interested in protecting their own interests. Salvation is a gift from God because for God all things are possible. But it is necessary that human beings are open, receptive and welcoming of this great gift.

- What attachments are holding you back from following Jesus wholeheartedly? Examine your own attitude to material possessions. Are you as generous in sharing your wealth as you could be?
- Pope Francis, reinforcing the teaching of both Pope Benedict and Pope John Paul II, speaks of 'being more' rather than 'having more'. Explore what this means.

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- 'Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him.' Rest quietly in the gaze of Jesus and know you are loved. How open are you to the challenge of living with different priorities? What are you prepared to leave behind to follow Christ?
- 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Have you ever really wanted something but were unable to take the steps needed to achieve it? Was this by choice or necessity? How much was this due to fear of letting go of something? How are we called to live in this modern age in order to inherit eternal life? Share your reflections together.
- Undertake works of charity this week. Be generous with your wealth but also with your time and your attention to those who are in need.
- Use this week's psalm as a prayer:

*Fill us with your love, O Lord,  
and we shall sing with joy.  
Make us know the shortness of our life  
that we may gain wisdom of heart.*

