

## 28<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (YEAR B)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has several references to today's gospel of the Rich Young Man, one of which concerns difficulties we can experience in prayer. It states: *'Finally, our battle has to confront what we experience as failure in prayer: discouragement during periods of dryness; sadness that, because we have "great possessions," we have not given all to the Lord; disappointment over not being heard according to our own will; wounded pride, stiffened by the indignity that is ours as sinners; our resistance to the idea that prayer is a free and unmerited gift; and so forth. The conclusion is always the same: what good does it do to pray? To overcome these obstacles, we must battle to gain humility, trust, and perseverance.'*<sup>1</sup>

Today's gospel does not simply concern attachment to material riches. It also concerns any attachments that we may have that get in the way of our relationship with God and limit our freedom to follow Jesus as his disciples. Indeed, it concerns anything, as the Catechism states, that prevents us from giving 'all to the Lord.'

Unhealthy attachments can come in all shapes and sizes. Any of us can have spiritual attachments to pride, envy, avarice (greed), wrath (anger), lust, gluttony and sloth (laziness). These are what the church terms 'capital sins' because they engender the other sins and vices.<sup>2</sup> We can become attached to self-gratification in the form of food, drink, or sex. We can be attached to forms of entertainment such as the television or video games. We can be attached to worldly desires such as money and power, or we may be attached to gossip. There are many more examples. Some of our attachments we may be aware of, others we may not be aware of.

The interesting thing about walking with Jesus is that sooner or later, the things that we are attached to begin to come to light. We discover our level of attachment to things only when we try to let go of them. We begin to realise that we are not as free as we thought we were!

Only this week I have been thinking about how easy it is to be drawn out of our inner peace when demands from outside come crashing in. It is so easy to start worrying about this thing or that, or to begin feeling overwhelmed with all that needs to be done and the lack of time or resources that may be available. It is easy for feelings of frustration, anger, blame or resentment to suddenly rise up within us when all is not going to plan or we simply feel that things are out of our control. It is in these testing times that the Lord invites us, as he does with the young man today, to go and sell everything and simply follow him. In other words, detach from those things that take us away from him. Let go of the perceived 'right' you feel to be angry, or resentful, or blaming, or condemning, or whatever else it is that you are struggling with.

Whatever our attachments may be, the Lord invites us to let go of them, to trust him, to walk in freedom with him, and to remain in his peace and in his love. As the Catechism says, we need to battle in prayer in these times to gain humility, trust and perseverance.

God bless,

Fr Andy

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<sup>1</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), Paragraph 2728.

<sup>2</sup> See CCC 1866.