

Missionary Commentary

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 13, 2024

Sunday Readings

Wisdom 7:7-11
Psalm 90:12-17
Hebrews 4:12-13
Mark 10:17-30

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Wise Use of Material Goods

A common theme in the first reading and Gospel of today speaks about how the material things of this world are to be properly used to enhance our own lives as well as the lives of others. Also, there are the related biblical themes of social justice and concern for the poor.

Jesus' Perspective. A perusal of the New Testament reveals multiple passages where Jesus expresses his views. "Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moths and termites destroy and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourself in heaven.... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.... You cannot be the slave of both God and money" (Mt 6:19-21, 24; cf. Lk 12:33-34).

To the rich young man who asked how he could possess eternal life, Jesus responded: "If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then, come, follow me" (Mt 19:21; cf. Mk 10:21). Similarly, Jesus tells us: "When you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right hand is doing" (Mt 6:3). Admittedly, these are some of Jesus' "hard statements"!

Additional Biblical Insights. The Book of Ecclesiastes (5:9) notes: "He who loves money, never has money enough; he who loves wealth, never has enough profit." The Psalmist advises (62:10): "Put no trust in extortion, no empty hope in plunder; though riches may increase, keep your heart detached." Proverbs (23:4) asserts: "Do not weary yourself with getting rich."

Saint Paul writes to his beloved disciple Timothy: "As long as we have food and clothing, let us be content with that. People who long to be rich are a prey to temptation; they get trapped into all sorts of foolish and dangerous ambitions.... The *love of money* is the root of all evils" (1Tim 6:8-10).

Deeper Reflection. Carefully note that Jesus and the Bible are **not** asserting that money and material goods are evil. We all need a variety of material goods (food, clothing, shelter) to live a dignified human life. There is absolutely nothing wrong in wanting to secure the physical well-being of your own self and your family; actually, it is demanded of us as responsible adults. Our loving God requires it of us!

What Jesus, the scriptures, and the Church ask of us is to *carefully examine* our desires and our motivations in using material things. When the love of wealth, power, influence, and prestige become *excessive*, the sins of greed and pride enter. They begin to destroy us and our relationships with others and with God. We need a very sensitive conscience to avoid this trap; we need to carefully examine our "inordinate desires" and "disordered affections" with regard to material things.

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Contemporary Challenges. Probably one of the most serious challenges facing many Christians today is “rampant consumerism.” Pope Francis (*Evangelii Gaudium* 53) has warned against such consumerism; it creates “an economy of exclusion and inequality” among the poor and marginalized; we have created a “throw-away culture” which continues to spread. Francis notes how “business interests and consumerism ... [are] actually making our earth less rich and beautiful” (*Laudato Si* 34).

Following today’s scripture readings, name for yourself some obstacles in our modern society and life-style that harm us personally and our relationships—hampering our entry into the Kingdom of God.

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

Wisdom 7:7-11 — The Book of Wisdom, written about 100 BC, prepares us for the teachings of Jesus Christ; in addition, it expresses the famous prayer of the young Solomon who seeks wisdom above everything else

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 90:12-17 — This psalm is a prayer for divine wisdom; we ask God: “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart.”

Second Reading

Hebrews 4:12-13 — The letter to the Hebrews was written by a nameless author, addressing an educated community. Here the author speaks of God’s Word as piercing into our souls. We are reminded that we cannot avoid meeting God face to face.

Gospel

Mark 10:17-30 — In today’s familiar Gospel from Mark we see Jesus addressing a sincere rich, young man, seeking to know “what must I do to share in everlasting life.” Jesus identifies two ideals to follow: (1) live a lifestyle of poor simplicity and (2) give up everything of this world in order to follow Jesus more closely.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James Kroeger, who recently published [Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language](#) (Orbis Books – 2023), and [A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis: Exploring Twelve Pivotal Documents](#) (Faith Alive Books – 2024).

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