

Sunday, October 11, 2015

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading Wisdom 7:7-11

2nd Reading: Hebrews 4:12-13

Responsorial: Psalm 90:12-17

Gospel: Mark 10: 17-30

Being Good and Generous Stewards of Our Money

How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! (Mark 10:23)

Can a rich person go to heaven? Of course. But as the Book of Proverbs says, “Those who trust in their riches will fall” (Proverbs 11:28). Not because money is inherently evil, but because of how easily we can become attached to it and let it rule us. The rich man in today’s Gospel reading followed God’s commandments. Yet, according to Jesus, he was too attached to his wealth, and it was holding him back.

The founder of the Methodist faith, John Wesley, presented a simple yet profound sermon that was titled “The Use of Money.” What he wrote might help us as we try to deal with the issue of money.

In his sermon called “The Use of Money,” Wesley made three simple points: “Make all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can.”

Make all you can. Wesley believed that Christians should be industrious, clever, and hardworking. As he saw it, nothing is wrong with making money, as long as it is legal, ethical, and doesn’t hurt anyone.

Save all you can. Wesley urged his people to be frugal. They should live simply and avoid extravagance. But why should we live simply and save? So that we can fulfill the third point.

Give all you can. If we work hard and save frugally, we will have more to share with the people around us. Of course, generosity begins in our homes, but it should also extend to the Church and to the hungry and needy among us.

According to some calculations, in one year John Wesley earned the equivalent of \$1.4 million in today’s money. But he lived on only 2 percent of his income and gave away the rest. Over his entire lifetime, he earned the equivalent of \$30 million. But when he died, he had given away all of it. That’s the way to live!

May we all try to live simply so that we can live generously.

“Lord, teach me to be as generous as you are.”

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Questions for Reflection/Discussion

1. In the first reading, the author of the Book of Wisdom prays for prudence and wisdom. Prudence is not fear, or timidity. It is the ability to direct our conduct in accordance with sound and Godly judgment – to know what is good and to choose the right means of achieving it. Why do you find that there are times when our actions are not aligned with what we know to be correct? What steps can you take to improve coordination between your judgment and your actions?
2. Wisdom, which is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, enables us to know God and His will for our lives. The author of the Book of Wisdom says that it is more valuable than a throne, riches, gold, silver, health, and comeliness. Why would he make such a drastic claim? What area(s) of your life do you need prayers for an increase in the gift of wisdom?
3. The responsorial Psalm begins with these words, “Teach us to number our days aright, that we gain wisdom of heart” (Psalm 90:12). Why do you think numbering our days aright is tied to wisdom? The psalmist also asks to be filled with the Lord’s kindness so that “we may shout for joy and gladness all our days” (90:14). What can you do to open yourself more to the Lord’s kindness so you can express your thankfulness with greater joy? The responsorial Psalm ends with these words: “Prosper the work of our hands.” How would you relate these words to the rest of the Psalm?
4. The second reading tells us that God’s word is “living and effective,” and so finely tuned an instrument that it is able to “discern the reflections and thoughts of the heart.” How do you use God’s word, the Scriptures, to help form your thoughts and direct your actions? How can you go even deeper in studying and applying Scripture to your daily life?
5. In the Gospel, Jesus’ admonition against riches also applies to all of those things in our lives that have a hold on us and distract us from loving and serving God. What can you do to lessen the hold “things” have over you and increase the hold God has over you?
6. Jesus also went on to say that whoever was willing to give up everything for him will “receive a hundred times more.” What do you think Jesus meant by these words and how do they apply to your life? Why do we often struggle to believe them? Are there some additional ways your possessions (your time, your talent, and your treasure) can be better used to serve God, his Church, and others?
7. The title for this meditation is “Being Good and Generous Stewards of Our Money.” The meditation describes the three points that John Wesley made in his sermon called “The Use of Money,” The three points were: “Make all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can.” How do these points relate to the ways you try to be a good steward in how you use your money?
8. Take some time now to pray and ask the Lord for the grace to truly be a generous steward of your money -- and all your resources. Use the prayer at the end of the meditation as the starting point.

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, a director of partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** (www.wau.org) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Maurice was also the founding Executive Director of the **National Fellowship of Catholic Men**, for which he is currently a Trustee (<http://www.nfcmusa.org/>). He can be contacted at mblumberg@wau.org or mblumberg@aol.com.]