

REFLECTION FOR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

What is the purpose of our life? For what purpose are we born? How can we live a meaningful life? These questions have always accompanied man throughout his history. One of the answers people have found is: that men and women are born to live life on Earth with eternal life as the goal. This is why, in today's Gospel, a rich young man asks Jesus Christ about this very subject: *“Good Teacher, what must I do to attain eternal life?”* To this question Jesus gives the traditional answer of any Jewish “Teacher”: *“Keep the commandments: do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery, honor father and mother...”*

This is what that young man was already trying to do, but he felt he was missing something more. The Gospel says that Jesus looked at him with sympathy and added: *“You lack one thing: go sell what you have, give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.”*

It's true that the path to a life with God lies in fulfilling his commandments, which can be summed up as loving God, and loving our brothers and sisters; but Jesus Christ asks more of us, he asks us for a life in which he is our wealth, our first love. This is the reason he challenges us to let go of our possessions and do good with them, to help those in need, to be on the side of the poor. The disciple who follows Jesus Christ can only do so with an attitude like this, of detachment from material wealth, of poverty, of attention to his brothers and sisters.

In the Gospel, it is said that the young man was not able to take this leap, to leave his possessions to follow Christ. He was too “rich in his lifestyle.” Jesus tells his disciples that it is difficult for a “wealthy man” to enter the Kingdom of God, because no one can serve God and money. The disciples were astonished by these words, since in Jewish culture wealth was seen as a blessing from God. If wealth were a blessing, how could a “rich person” not enter the Kingdom of God?

Wealth can be a blessing if it serves God's interests, if we use it to help build a more humane world, if we help our brothers and sisters in need. Possessions are only possessions if they serve to do good. The tendency of those with money or privilege is to cling to their possessions, always wanting more, making wealth an end in itself, when the ultimate end of our lives should be “eternal life,” and possessions a means to get treasures in heaven.

To do this, we need to ask the Lord to give us his wisdom; to illuminate our lives with his light and his word, as the first reading tells us. Enlightened by the Word of

God and cultivating the wisdom appropriate to be Jesus' disciples, we will certainly follow the path that leads to a full life, to God, and to eternal life.

Amen.