

Homily101418

THE THINGS WE HAVE: DO THEY HAVE US OR DO WE HAVE THEM?

Do I cede power and control of my life to the things I own?

We all know this story about the rich young man. He went away sad because he had many possessions. When Jesus interacted with him, do you get the sense that Jesus thought this fellow was toying with him to trap him or rather that he was really serious about eternal life? I think Jesus saw something in this guy and Mark even says that Jesus looked at him with love before he told him what to do.

If you are like me when I was younger I could not help thinking that this story is exactly what I thought God is going to do with us in this life if we really open ourselves to Him. I had this fear that God would ask something beyond me or to give up something I liked and enjoyed and didn't want to give up or ask something more than I could give or was prepared to give. The problem with that way of thinking is that it kind of presupposes bad faith on God's part and good intentions on my own. Which really isn't the case.

Here is what I have come to believe about my relationship with God although I did not always believe it. I believe God wants for me what I most want for myself even if I don't always know what that is or understand what that is. After 70 plus years I have never known God to ask me to give up something that was really good for me. I have experienced God asking me to give up things that were bad for me. I have experienced God helping me to give up the things that were bad for me. And patiently so, waiting until I was ready to let them go and begin really to trust Him.

The first line of the first reading is this "I prayed to God for wisdom." I have. I am guessing that you have too because we really need wisdom to help us make good decisions about ourselves and our loved ones and our relationships and responsibilities. What we do not always realize is that Jesus himself is God's Wisdom. God Wisdom Incarnate. Jesus is God's Word and the letter to the Hebrews describes this Word: living, active, really sharp, piercing, fully grasping the whole of the human heart. God's wisdom reveals all.

Actually it is only God's Word that is truly able to penetrate my heart and my soul. The reason why that is so is because Jesus is Love Incarnate. And only Love can do these things. We are here for a purpose. It is no accident that we exist. And somewhere along the way there is a moment or there are several moments when that purpose is revealed to us. The moment will always involve love in some fashion. And it is possible to miss that moment. It is possible to give in to the fears like this young man does. In life there are sometimes moments of missed opportunities when we do not forgive or we do not take the road less traveled or we do not open our hearts to let love in or when we choose not to find a way through. But I have also found that the Lord does not stop asking us.

Rarely do we think of Our God as a Risk Taker but God truly is. In creation God gives freedom to angels and men. God trusts us even when we prove to be untrustworthy. God takes risks. Why? Because that is what Love does. And God is love. This young man is afraid to take the risk. The reason Jesus looks at him with love is so that he won't be afraid. That's why Our Lord looks at us with love too. In the Eucharist at the consecration. Dare to see his look of love for you.