

**O. T. XXVIII SUNDAY WIS. 7:7-11, HEB 4:12-13; MARK 10: 17-31**

"Take back your coins and give back my songs." The French have a story about a millionaire, who spent his days counting his gold coins. Beside his palace was a poor cobbler who spent his days singing as he repaired people's shoes. The joyful singing irritated the rich man. One day he decided to give some gold coins to the cobbler. At first the cobbler was overjoyed, and he took the coins and hid them. But then he worried about the coin and was constantly going back to make sure the coins were still there. Then he worried in case someone had seen him, and might steal the coins. Consequently, he ceased to sing. Then one day he realized that he had ceased to sing because of the gold coins. He took them back to the rich man and said, "Take back your coins and give me back my songs." Inordinate attachment to riches can take away our freedom and joy.

In today's gospel we find three sections: a narrative about Jesus' encounter with a rich man, Jesus' sayings about wealth as a possible obstacle to following him and Jesus' promise of reward for those who share material possessions with the needy.

Obviously it is clear from the Gospel that this young man who came to Jesus in search of eternal life really wanted to be accepted by Jesus as a disciple. But Jesus did not want this man as a disciple on his own terms, but rather on Jesus' terms. His tragedy was that he loved "things" more than people. He failed to realize the fact that his riches had built a wall between himself and God. In other words, his possessions "possessed him". He worshiped his wealth more than God.

Jesus told the young man that, if he wanted to be perfect, keeping the commandments was not enough. He challenged the young man to share his riches with the poor. *"There is one thing lacking. Sell all you have and give to the poor, and then you will have real treasure. After that, come and be with me."* Jesus thus makes it clear that a true follower who wants to possess eternal life must not only be a respectable gentleman who hurts nobody, but also someone who shares his riches, talents and other blessings with the less fortunate. In other words, Jesus tells the young man that life is a matter of priorities. God must have the first priority. Unfortunately, the rich man was unwilling to accept Jesus' idea that wealth is not something to be

owned but rather something to be shared with others. Jesus asked him to break his selfish attachment to his wealth by sharing it. He makes the same challenge to each of us today. Our following of Jesus has to be totally and absolutely unconditional. Our attachment may not be to money or material goods; it could be to another person, a job, our health, or our reputation.

I conclude my reflection by saying "Do something beautiful for God" by reaching out to others. That's the message we need to reflect on. Mother Teresa puts it in a different way: *"Do SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL for God. Do it with your life. Do it every day. Do it in your own way. But do it!"*

#### **JOKE OF THE WEEK**

A wealthy older gentleman had just recently married a lovely young lady, and was beginning to wonder whether she might have married him for his money. So he asked her, "Tell me the truth: if I lost all my money, would you still love me?" She said reassuringly, "Oh honey, don't be silly. Of course I would still love you. And I'd miss you terribly."