

Wisdom 7:7-11

Psalm 90:12-13, 14-15,
16-17

Hebrews 4:12-13

Mark 10:17-30 or 10:17-27



Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 13, 2024



REFLECTION

What do you need to do to get to heaven? Jesus clearly and directly aligns his teaching with the Ten Commandments, which guide our relationship with God and one another. They instruct us to place God first, act with justice and truth, and respect life. The rich young man sensed that there was something more to it and pressed Jesus, who looked at him not with judgment, but with love. Eternal life is not something we can earn by following the Ten Commandments like a checklist. It is a gift from God, who wants us to completely rely on him, as a young child depends on parents. We cannot get into heaven any easier than a large camel can get through a miniscule opening. We need God to do it, and we need to learn to instinctively turn to him in every situation, in good times and in bad. By doing this, we become less self-reliant, less dependent on the things of this world, and more God-reliant.

ACTION

A good way to deal with being overly attached to material things is to give them away. This week, encourage your family to work together to donate food, clothing, or supplies to a local shelter or food pantry. Your parish might know of organizations you could connect with. Go through your own belongings and determine what you can donate. If there are things of good quality, consider selling them and donating the proceeds to those in need.



Check out Miguel Nuñez's short article "Why Heaven is Ultimate #Goals."

<https://lifeteen.com/heaven-ultimate-goals/>



QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Which of the Ten Commandments do you practice well? Which do you struggle with?
- ❖ Are there any material possessions that you know you struggle being overly attached to? How can you become less dependent on them?



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TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #143B

Wisdom 7:7-11

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Hebrews 4:12-13

Mark 10:17-30 or 10:17-27

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Today we hear about Jesus being approached by a wealthy man seeking a deeper faith. He seems to honestly desire eternal life, and Jesus shows him the way: follow the commandments, rid yourself of possessions, and come and follow me. The man went away sad because he couldn't give up his riches. Though we are not all wealthy, we all have things that hinder us from following God. The teens are invited to consider what things (material possessions, peer pressure, and so on) keep them from following God. It is not easy, and we hear the disciples exclaim over the seeming impossibility of entering the kingdom of God. But nothing is impossible for God.

Q FOCUS: *Whatever the cost, following Jesus is worth it.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On October 15, the Church celebrates St. Teresa of Avila (also called St. Teresa of Jesus). She was born in Spain in 1515 and died in 1582. During her lifetime, there was much turmoil within the Church as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation took place. She was a Carmelite nun but found their practices to be too lax and so she worked to reform the order to better follow their religious rule. Focusing on the crucified Christ and attitudes of poverty, she

and St. John of the Cross worked to bring these reforms to their Carmelite communities, starting a new order called the Discalced Carmelites. She was a mystic and was deeply spiritual. She was named a saint in 1622 and in 1970 she was declared a Doctor of the Church. This is a title given to some saints who, through their writings and actions, greatly contributed to the life of the Church.

Church Teaching Connection

"The question which the rich young man puts to Jesus of Nazareth is one which rises from the depths of his heart. It is *an essential and unavoidable question for the life of every man*, for it is about the moral good which must be done, and about eternal life. The young man senses that there is a connection between moral good and the fulfilment of his own destiny" (Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 8).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 10:17-30

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one

is good but God alone. You know the commandments: *You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.*" He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God." Peter began to say to him, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

A man excitedly ran up to Jesus. He wanted to know how to inherit eternal life. He wasn't trying to trap

or trick Jesus. He was hopeful, he was seeking. Jesus' answer seems pretty standard: follow the commandments. That wasn't enough for the man, he knew there was more. Jesus recognized in him a heart that desired God. So Jesus gave him a deeper answer, that the man should give up everything and follow Jesus.

The Gospel says the man went away sad. We can imagine that Jesus was sad as well. He was inviting the man to so much more than this world had to offer. But the man couldn't accept that invitation, at least not then. It was too hard because of all of the things he had.

► What are some things that hold us back from following the Lord today?

For this man, it was the material world. For some of us, it could be fear. Following Jesus is difficult in today's society. Christ offers a countercultural lifestyle that often goes against most of pop culture and social media.

► What are some values of God's kingdom that seem opposed to the values of today's society?

Saints throughout the ages have followed the radical call that the man did not. They gave up everything to follow God. They did not go away sad, but rather came forward and were filled. They rejoiced in God, even in their suffering and struggle.

Jesus extends the same invitation to us today. First, we must follow the commandments. We are called to be faithful to the teachings of the Church and to love God above all things. The next step is even harder, we need to examine our lives and give up what hinders us from following God more closely. Lastly, we are invited into a personal relationship with Jesus, to walk with him and be open to where he leads us.

Jesus tells us that those who do this will receive many blessings, because whatever the cost is, following Jesus is worth it. The Lord loves us and gives us the freedom to choose him. Will we go away sad or will we follow? The choice is ours.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 46.

To obtain eternal life, Jesus tells us to follow the commandments and give up worldly things.

Recognizing what holds us back from following God is the first step to a better relationship with him.

Following Jesus is a choice each of us has the freedom to make.

Act on the Word

Eye of the Needle Obstacle Course

For this activity, you will need balloons, sharpies, and an obstacle course comprised of things found around the classroom space or youth office, like tables, chairs, bins, or other objects.

This obstacle course activity is meant to illustrate the verse "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." The first part is reflective and the second part is more active. A discussion at the end will help connect the activity to today's lesson.

Prepare for the activity by blowing up many balloons with air (not helium). You will want at least one balloon per person but can have more. Prepare an obstacle course before the activity begins, using common materials found in your ministry space. This may include things like tables, chairs, bins, and other equipment. As you design it, keep in mind that the object of the activity is for the young people to carry at least four balloons with them as they try to make it through the obstacle course.

Begin the activity by reminding the teens about how the rich man was seeking eternal life but he went away sad because he had many possessions and couldn't part with them. Then ask the young people to brainstorm obstacles that keep teenagers from

following God. This can build upon the discussion you had earlier in today's session. Have them write these obstacles on the balloons, one obstacle per balloon. Obstacles can be repeated, but try to encourage them to think of as many as they can.

After writing, divide the group into teams of four. Give each team at least four balloons that have writing on them. Divide any extra balloons among the teams. Then explain to the teams that each team member will go through the obstacle course one at a time, and that each person must carry four balloons (or however many you choose) at all times. They must carry all the balloons through the obstacle course; if one drops, they must start over.

The course may be so challenging that the young people are unable to complete it. That is okay! The challenges they face in trying to carry all the balloons while going through the course give them a glimpse of what we are like when we try to follow Jesus but won't let go of the things of this world that get in the way of following him. Once the teams have finished attempting the course, spend some time reflecting on their experience and how it relates to Jesus' teaching in today's Gospel.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
we know it is impossible to earn
your divine blessing.

Instruct and guide us
so that we might be able to

let go of everything that keeps us
from your holy presence.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.