

Chaplain's Bulletin September 25, 2022



Dear Folks,

A theme of the Gospel readings from Luke this fall is our response to God's gifts. God has given us the most wonderful gift of the Catholic faith, and this is a good time to ask how we are stewarding that gift.

Many who were raised Catholic have been sacramentalized but not evangelized, with what Pope Benedict called "The torpor of a Christianity of mere sacramentalism, little different from magic, and not productive of the faith that comes from hearing (From Theological Highlights of Vatican II)." That is so sad when we think of what can be.

It's not just a matter of accumulating tidbits of information but developing a Catholic perspective and a Catholic imagination. In the words of "From Christendom to Apostolic Mission" by the University of Mary, "Christians don't see some things differently than others: they see everything differently in the light of the extraordinary drama they have come to understand." We follow God's teaching, not because God is standing over us to smite us the minute we step out of line, but because it is the fullest, most free, most ultimately satisfying way to live, and because the more we grow in our love for God, the more we want to please Him. Moral principles are not rules arbitrarily imposed upon us, but revelation of how to live out our dignity. The challenge is to learn and share this great treasure.

We have so many resources now for everyone to be able to learn more about the Catholic faith. At Saints CJM, we have access to Formed.org, and many others do as well. That makes available a huge treasure of books, video, and movies of every description. [I really wish that everyone everyone everyone would watch Trent Horn's one hour talk "How to Talk about Marriage and Same-Sex Unions." If we want to make headway, we don't start with appeals to religion or tradition, but humanity, and why would society privilege a certain type of relationship.] There are so many wonderful books, study programs, even YouTube videos, and anyone can do little bits when we get a moment. We are surrounded by tremendous wealth.

Jesus said, "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more (Luke 12:48b)." Read Luke 12:41-48 if you dare.

Our Gospel reading this Sunday is about the rich man and Lazarus, and the rich man had been abundantly blessed with material goods, and did nothing to share with poor Lazarus, who lay dying outside his gate. The Gospels are pretty fierce about the mandate for Christians to address physical poverty. Now, what about the poverty of spirit? We have been so richly blessed with the treasures of our Catholic faith, and the world is full of people suffering and dying because they don't have this truth (Show hands, who thinks the world would be a better place with more Jesus in people's lives?). What will God say to us if we decide it's not our job to help share the goodness, beauty, and truth of Jesus and His story with the world?

I know people are horrifically busy, overwhelmed, and tired from the other demands of life. If you can only do a tiny, little bit but do it with all you have, that is huge in the Gospel perspective. Remember the story of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4). The critical thing is that we recognize the great need to do what we can and be ready to tell God that we did the very best we knew how. He will take care of the rest.

Blessings,

Fr Jim