

Readings Wisdom 7: 7-11; Hebrews 4: 12-13; Mark 10: 17-30



Fr Michael says:

The Rich Young Man

Discipleship encourages us to ask the right questions as we seek to live this calling more daily. Wisdom gives us the insights we need to live rightly and use what we have with discretion and insight to fulfil God's will. Hebrews affirms the power of the Word of God in our lives, to maximise our maturation. Jesus invites us to see things clearly, riches are not signs of God's favour to us, as the people thought, they can indeed become obstacles to us! Salvation comes from God alone! Living in poverty or desiring goods and riches are not the ways forward only means to an end.

The rich young man asks a profound question, as it stems from the most basic question of all: "what is the purpose of our life?" For us, Christians the answer has to be: "Eternal life!" We will have asked similar questions at various times in our lives. Are they still being asked even now, when the routine of life and our obligations can have taken over and we are immersed in them?

It is possible that the young man is sincere and has discovered that asking these sorts of questions has led him into difficult situations with others: ones which many people do not wish to hear! Moral and spiritual values are often the last things that arise in discussions. An American psychiatrist has observed: "To a large extent our lives are spent in avoiding a confrontation with ourselves. Most of our daily activities facilitate this. They distract us from ourselves, and from reflection. We are tranquillised by the trivial!"

Jesus' reply stresses the essential – but also the minimum expected! "Keep the commandments." WE can and should go beyond this – to greatness - say good bye to the old ways, to explore a new world! The young man is aware of this and realises that he is not up for it. Where are we on this scale of challenge? Jesus expects the best we can give and won't settle for anything less. What this means will vary for each of us, but we are here today and hopefully most Sundays, when Jesus explains His message and offers to walk for us to respond. Jesus walks with us in faith and identifies with fully in the muck and the grime, as well as the joys and celebrations. Above all we are called to trust and commit ourselves to Him; if we rely only on what we have we will not move forward.

The young man went away sad, because he chose to live for himself – we can feel the same. Jesus was sad to see him go, but He let him go – He does not force us to make sacrifices. If we take things away from people they are impoverished, if they are prepared to give them up, then they are enriched! We are essentially good people, but that goodness needs to radiate, so that we can enter the Kingdom of love and service to God and those around us. May today's message awaken in us the desire to do just that!