

Homily 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time (14.10.18)

Make a new beginning - give a generous heart to the Lord.

Most of us are already familiar with the story recounted in today's Gospel, about the young man. Here was a young man, a good living man, who tried to do the right things to keep God's commandments faithfully, but he wanted to do a little more for God. We could say that he was on the right track, that he was on the road to salvation. So he asked Jesus what else he could do in order to inherit eternal life. He was seeking the advice of Jesus.

In response, Jesus spoke those memorable words which have echoed down through the ages,

"There is one thing you lack. Go and sell what you have and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me."

The young man did not accept the invitation, because he was a man of great wealth, and the Gospel tells us that he went away sorrowful.

Jesus wanted the young man to take a risk for the sake of having treasure in heaven. The young man had the security of wealth, he did not want to give that up. He was ready to follow Jesus, but not at the risk of losing his possessions. Jesus did not just want a disciple who would avoid evil, but one who would positively do good. He wanted a committed disciple, a disciple of love. This the young man could not give, so he went away sad.

The attitude of that young man contrasts greatly with another young man whose feast day we kept last week. This young man was the son of a wealthy merchant who gradually became aware of the poverty and suffering that surrounded him. He was [Francis of Assisi](#). He gave up all his wealth, all his possessions in order to follow Jesus. He was ready to take the risk. He did not know where following the Lord would lead him, but he was ready to give all. We admire Francis of Assisi, even though perhaps we think we are not good enough to imitate him. However, down through the centuries, in every age, there have been people who responded to our Lord's invitation, who have left

everything in order to follow Christ, beginning with the apostles who left their homes and families, their boats and nets in order to give themselves to preaching the Gospel of Christ. And down through the years, every generation has had apostles who have given their time to the service of God, who have taken a risk for the sake of the Gospel.

What about us? Is the Lord calling us to do something special? We will not be, or it isn't likely we will be called upon to do something very heroic like Francis of Assisi. But there are things that we can all do and the Lord is usually not asking us to do great things, but to do little things well for love of him. In our everyday lives we take risks all the time. Sometimes it has to do with very serious decisions. It might be whether to sell our house, to emigrate, to look for a new job, but it might be something more trivial, like buying a car, or deciding which horse to back in a race.

Jesus is asking us to do something special for him. Now, what we CAN do is perhaps decide to make a good confession. Make a new beginning in our lives. Perhaps we could decide to go to a weekday Mass, so that we could give more time to the Lord. Perhaps we could come to devotions. Pope Francis has asked us during the month of October to say the rosary for the well-being of the Church. Maybe you think saying a full rosary every day is too much. Perhaps you could say one or two decades. There is something we can all do for the Lord. And it doesn't always mean taking a great risk, like the young man in the gospel. What the Lord wants of us is a generous heart, a readiness to do our best, and to do especially something for his greater glory and also for the salvation of ourselves and others.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.