

Father O'Connor's Homily for 10 October 2021  
Twenty-Eighth Ordinary Sunday – B  
Stewardship Renewal Commitment Weekend

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

This is our Annual Stewardship Renewal Commitment Weekend. Thank you for being a part of this great opportunity for our Saint Joseph and Nativity Parish Families as we make our stewardship commitments together in the areas of time, talent and treasure for the next twelve months – as we strive to become even better disciples of Jesus.

I want to thank members of our Stewardship Council for all that they have done to make this annual renewal possible – and for all the behind-the-scenes things that they do all year-round to help us live “the stewardship way of life.”

I know that many of you have brought your commitment cards with you today, all filled-out. Thank you! Others of you have already mailed in your commitment cards. Thank you!

Perhaps you forgot to fill-out a card. Well, I am going to give you the opportunity to do so right here with the cards in the pews. The cards trimmed in gold are for Saint Joseph parishioners. The cards trimmed in blue are for Nativity parishioners.

You can use one card for all the persons in your household – adults and young people. Please write your first name next to the ministry that you are either “already involved in” or that you are “interested in joining.”

At the time of the collection, we may all deposit our completed commitment cards in the basket along with our regular Offertory envelopes.

Since this Commitment Weekend is so important, if you have not already completed a card, I invite you to do so right now – hoping that you brought a pen with you – while I offer some thoughts about today's Gospel.

When I was growing up, I would often hear my mother say: “Now stand tall, put your shoulders back and hold your head high because good posture says a lot about the person inside.”

Well, it's true. Our body language does tell a lot about what is going on inside of us. And today's Gospel is a case in point.

A rich young man ran up to Jesus and knelt down before Him. It is important to note how the man came: **he came running, and he flung himself at Jesus' feet.** There is something amazing about this rich, young aristocrat falling at the feet of the penniless prophet from Nazareth.

And then the young man asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus told him: "Keep all of the commandments."

The man replied: "I have kept all of the commandments since I was a little boy." Notice that all the commandments that Jesus quoted, except for one, began with the words, "You shall not."

In effect, the young man was saying, "I never in my life did anyone any harm." That was perfectly true. But the real question of Jesus was, "What good have you done?" Respectability, on the whole, consists in not doing bad things. Discipleship consists in doing good things.

Then the Gospel says that "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." Poor posture – "his face fell." You can picture him walking away, a bit hunched over because of his sadness. His body language revealed the struggle that was going on inside of him.

Jesus was confronting this young man with an essential question: "How much do you really want to be my disciple? Do you want it bad enough to give your possessions away?"

And the man answered, in effect, "I do want it. But I don't want it as bad as all that." It was the malady of "not wanting it bad enough" which meant tragedy for the man who, at first, came running to Jesus. It is the malady from which we can suffer too. We all want to be disciples, but do we "want it bad enough" to pay the price, whatever that may be in our lives?

This Gospel is not, first and foremost, about money. Its message is about being a disciple of Jesus. There are many obstacles we can face. For the rich young man, his obstacle was his possessions. And so he went away sad.

Do you consider yourself wealthy? I would imagine that if I were to ask all the wealthy people in this church to stand up right now, you would all remain seated. Why? Because "being wealthy" is relative. No matter how much we have, we can always think of someone that we think has more than we do.

Try to tell a homeless person that you have nothing to share because you are too poor. Do you think that homeless person would believe you? After all, we all have a place to call home, we all have food for the day, and none of us is wearing right now every piece of clothing that we own.

We do need money to take care of our needs. Yet money alone does not give us full security in life. But sometimes we live as though it did.

That was the trouble with the rich young man in the Gospel. He not only owned things, but his possessions actually owned him. He could not let go of them long enough to open his hand to the hand of Jesus.

What if this Gospel had ended differently? What if that rich young man had said: “Yes, Jesus. Just give me a little time and I will go home and put everything on the market and give the proceeds to the poor. Please keep my spot open as your disciple. I will be right back.”

If he had said this, he would have walked away with a smiling face [and not a sad one], standing tall with his shoulders back, and knowing that Jesus was calling him to something more.

Jesus looks upon us with love too. What is Jesus asking of you right now so that you can become an even better disciple? Do not be afraid to listen to Him. You can count on Jesus for the grace to do it. And your whole demeanor will likely reveal who it is that you love and who it is that you serve.

Lord, deliver us from the malady of “not wanting it bad enough.” And fill us with the holy desire to grow as the beloved disciples that you have it in your mind for us to be.