



Daily Reflections

August 20, 2018

Scripture

Matthew 19: 16-22

A young man approached Jesus and said,
"Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?"
He answered him, "Why do you ask me about the good?
There is only One who is good.
If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."
He asked him, "Which ones?"
And Jesus replied, "You shall not kill;
you shall not commit adultery;
you shall not steal;
you shall not bear false witness;
honor your father and your mother;
and you shall love your neighbor as yourself."
The young man said to him,
"All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?"
Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go,
sell what you have and give to the poor,
and you will have treasure in heaven.
Then come, follow me."
When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad,
for he had many possessions.

Our Scripture Reflection

Jesus never condemns wealth and possessions nor does He require every wealthy person He encounters to renounce everything for the sake of the Kingdom. In today's Gospel text a rich young man approaches Jesus with the desire to go to Heaven.

First, He tells the man to keep the Commandments which the man professes he is already doing. But then Jesus looks at the man with love and identifies a huge obstacle for him. The poor man's heart is knotted up by his possessions. Please note: Jesus identifies the knot but because He respects the man's free will He will not untie the knot for the man. Tragically, the man will not let go...he walks away from salvation because he is possessed by his possessions. What about You? This Scripture serves as a wake up call for all of us!

Food for your Journey

There was another prisoner of the Nazis, not as well-known as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, but just as spiritually deep. Alfred Delp was a Jesuit priest charged with treason. The charge stemmed from some group discussions Father Delp had during the war, in which the participants imagined that Nazism collapsed, and they were creating a new social order from scratch. For his "defeatism," Father Delp was sentenced to imprisonment and death.

From his prison cell, he began a series of Advent meditations in this way:

"Advent is a time for rousing. Human beings are shaken to the very depths, so that they may wake up to the truth of themselves. The primary condition for a fruitful and rewarding Advent is renunciation, surrender ... a shattering awakening; that is the necessary preliminary. Life begins only when the whole framework is shaken."

Delp is writing this in conditions that rivaled John on the isle of Patmos and Paul in prison writing to the church at Philippi. The only kindness shown to him was a jailer who left his shackles loose enough to slip one hand free so that he could write these words, with handcuffs dangling and clanging as he wrote:

"The gospel ... evokes history. It refers to the mighty who determine the structure of the small room in which the Light of the World will come into being, bringing salvation. In order to recognize that a moment of historical crisis is implied here, we must clothe these names with the memory of the

part they played in history. From the imperial throne to the Holy of Holies, the outlook was hopeless. ... Hopeless - that is the iron with which history often seeks to fetter healing hands, breaking the hearts of the enlightened few and reducing them to trembling hesitancy or cheap silence or tired resignation."

-As quoted by Bill Wylie Kellerman, *Seasons of Faith and Conscience* (New York: Orbis, 1991), 137-138.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, I love You and want to spend eternal life with You in Heaven one day. Help me to remain focused on You and not what I possess. May I use the gifts You have given me for Your glory by assisting the needs of those who have nothing. Amen