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Monday's Gospel: Raising Our Heart to Christ's Riches

Gospel for Monday in the 8th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 10:17-27*)

And as Jesus was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud,

Honor your father and mother.” And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth.”

And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at

them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.”

Commentary

How can we enter eternal life? It is not a question of personal achievements or social status. It is about welcoming God, like a small child (cf. *Mk* 10:13-31). The rich young man asks Jesus how he can gain eternal life. Without showing his divinity, Christ invites him to keep the commandments. But the young man is already fulfilling them. Jesus looks at him with tenderness, and encourages him to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor. Not all the first Christians did this, but that is what Christ invites this young man to do. But the man is too attached to his goods, and

lacks generosity. What Jesus asked for was possible (cf. *Mk* 10:29-31), but it required great faith and an open heart.

The young man leaves with sadness in his heart. Attaching our heart to material goods is idolatry; it occupies our thoughts and paralyzes our freedom to love God. Detachment from these goods, in contrast, elevates our heart and opens it to others. Faith is much more valuable than gold (cf. *1 Pet* 1-7); it enables us to welcome the riches Christ offers, with eternal life. But it requires effort from us, which Jesus makes clear by the image of the camel and the needle. Whatever the exact meaning of the text, it shows how hard it is to give oneself completely. But for God everything is possible. Also for a child, who has his whole life ahead of him. Let us ask the Holy Spirit for the youthfulness of soul that opens our heart to the

adventure of love: giving ourselves to God and others. Holiness is for everyone a radical demand; it doesn't allow for "two speeds." But it is also a unique personal call for each man and woman.

Guillaume Derville

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