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Tuesday's Gospel: The Rich in the Kingdom of Heaven

Gospel for Tuesday in the 20th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 19:23-30*)

Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, 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.”

When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying,

“Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Then Peter said in reply, “Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first.”

Commentary

Jesus takes advantage of his encounter with the rich young man that we saw yesterday to teach his apostles the need for a heart that is detached from worldly goods. "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, 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."

A rich person is someone who is so attached to their wealth that they are unable to see beyond it. Their heart is so filled with earthly concerns that nothing else fits there. God refuses to enter a heart like this for the simple reason that it is already full.

Jesus isn't referring only to material wealth but also to everything that can enclose the heart within the prison of one's own narrow confines: arrogance, vanity, pride, selfishness, comfort-seeking, etc. It is harder to

keep one's heart detached from oneself than from material goods.

The Apostles listening to Jesus are disconcerted and ask: "Then who can be saved?" What they are really asking is: who can fill a person's heart with God? And Jesus replies: "With men this is impossible, but with God everything is possible." The goal is high, but the power of grace is even greater. God is demanding, but at the same time he makes this a reality in the lives of those who let our Lord enter their heart.

Peter then asks Jesus what they will receive for their generosity in following our Lord so closely. Jesus' reply leaves no room for doubt: "everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life."

God is never outdone in generosity. Sometimes thinking about the reward that awaits us if we are faithful can encourages us to continue fighting against the setbacks and hardships that we encounter along the way.

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