

*A Ministry of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province*

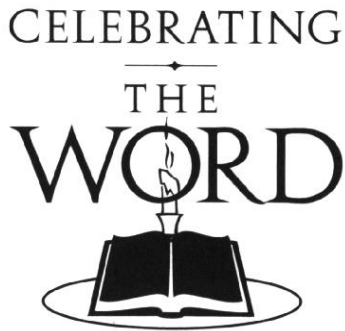
September 25, 2015

Fr. Fred is continuing his informational/background reflections on the 2015 Synod this week. In an effort to make accessing this timely info easier, you are encouraged to go to our website [www.resurrectionists.ca](http://www.resurrectionists.ca) then click on the “Blog” tab, then click on “Fr. Fred Scinto’s Blog” and the articles will be there for you to read. New issues will be posted weekly.

Should you like to have a copy of this document emailed directly to you, please contact Fr. Fred’s secretary, Barbara Diemert at [barbara11@rogers.com](mailto:barbara11@rogers.com)

Yours in Christ

Your Celebrating the Word Team



**Contributed by Father Tim Uniac, C.R.**

Father Tim was ordained in 1986. Over the years Father Tim has served in parish ministry as both Assistant Pastor and Pastor. For a number of years he worked full time in youth ministry. He has served his Religious Community as Vocation Director and as Vicar (Assistant) Provincial. Currently he serves his Community internationally as the Vicar General, residing in Rome, Italy.

## **TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**October 11, 2015**

**GATHERING TIME (10-15 minutes)**

### **Introduction to the Word:**

The human aging process brings with it many unique and never-before-experienced events. Physically, our bodies begin to slow down and change, and we find ourselves no longer able to do some of the things we have always done so easily in the past. Mentally, we are affected as well; our minds seemingly no longer able to recall everything as clearly or as swiftly as when we were younger – where did I put those car keys, anyway? Many find that aging brings with it a whole new vocabulary, not just all the medical terms and phrases we will encounter as we age, but perhaps the most feared of all phrases: *down-sizing*. Moving from one's life-long home into a smaller space is traumatic enough, but the real trauma hits home when we realize we cannot take everything with us to our new home, everything simply will not fit – down-sizing is in order. The grief of needing to let go of possessions we have valued for a lifetime takes hold, and the words of today's Gospel come alive, *“When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions”* (Mk 10:22). Letting go of valued possessions is no small task. However, once, when listening to an elderly gentleman grieving over possessions he had to let go of in order to enter a seniors home, his daughter said to him: *“Dad, you need to let go ... After all they are not going to attach a U-Haul trailer full of your possessions to the back of your funeral car”*. Harsh on the daughter's part, yes, yet, we all need to let go of things from time to time and recognize that our true wealth is our heavenly homeland.

### **Warm-Up Activity:** (about 8 – 10 minutes):

Reflect silently and privately upon the following questions, and then share, to the extent you are comfortable, with the members of your group.

1. In the *Book of Wisdom* today, you will encounter the grace of wisdom as King Solomon seeks this grace for himself. Wisdom is referred to in the text in feminine language; wisdom (in the Biblical languages) is female. Why is this so, and how can this interpretation be helpful to us?

2. In the letter to the Hebrews today, we are told that the word of God “*is living and active*”. What immediately comes to mind when you hear this? Have you experienced, or are you experiencing, God’s word in this way in your own prayer life?
3. In the Gospel today Jesus talks about the difficulty of someone who is rich entering the kingdom of God. While Jesus never says it is impossible, only difficult, what do you think Jesus means by this? Is Jesus anti-wealth?

### **The Table of the Word**

#### **THEME:**

#### *“Four Essential Habits of Prayer”*

In our relationship with God, we are invited to become people of prayer. However, the habit of prayer can sometimes be difficult and challenging, sometimes leaving us asking how we are to actually pray. Father Scott Traynor, JCL, in his book *The Parish as a School of Prayer* (IPF Publications, Omaha, 2013) suggests four habits in our prayer life that will both enhance and deepen our relationship with God. First, we are called to **acknowledge**, to take notice of those thoughts and feelings that are currently resting on our hearts – not to analyze, simply take note. Second, to **relate** what is on our hearts to God – to talk to God about our *heart issues* and entrust God with our very hearts. Third, **receive** the grace that God pours out upon us as we dialogue with God about our *heart issues*, to receive the love that God is sharing with us right now. And finally, to **respond** to the grace received from God, to allow it to influence our very lives. The four habits of prayer: acknowledge, relate, receive and respond.

**Leader:** As a people of prayer, we turn to our loving God and seek the mercy and forgiveness that God so freely offers.

**Lord Jesus**, help us to deepen our relationship with you in prayer,  
**Christ Jesus**, inspire us to open our hearts and minds completely to you,  
**Lord Jesus**, strengthen us to share with others our love for you,

**Lord, have mercy.**  
**Christ, have mercy.**  
**Lord, have mercy.**

**Let us pray** (*together*)

*May your grace, O Lord, we pray,  
 at all times go before us and follow after us,  
 and make us always determined  
 to carry out good works.*

*Through Jesus, who is Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.*

### **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME** (45 minutes)

(As Christians we believe that the **WORD** of God we hear proclaimed each Sunday is an empowering Word, and that God is present in the Word proclaimed. This is the Word that God wants us to hear today. The dynamic of the Small Christian Community, namely, reflecting on our life story within the context of this Word, and sharing the insights of these reflections, is such that God’s Spirit becomes present, and the gifts of the Spirit are experienced as empowering

and life giving. Because it is a privileged time it is incumbent on us in the small group to proclaim God's Word with due reverence, to be attentive to this proclamation, and respectful of the communal interaction. The facilitator has arranged for group members to proclaim the three readings.)

### **FIRST READING** (Wisdom 7:7–11)

I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called on God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her. Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all gold is but a little sand in her sight, and silver will be accounted as clay before her. I loved her more than health and beauty, and I chose to have her rather than light, because her radiance never ceases. All good things came to me along with her, and in her hands uncounted wealth.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **SECOND READING** (Hebrews 4:12–13)

The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before God no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL** (Mark 10:17–30)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother.’” He said to Jesus, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” When the man heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were perplexed at these 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 someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in

this age – houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields – but with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Lectio Divina** means “sacred prayer.” It was a popular form of prayer in the early Church. This Word proclaimed today is God’s own Word, God’s way of speaking to you today through his own Spirit. So take a few moments to be quiet, allowing this Word you have just heard to touch you as you reflect quietly on the three readings. Is there a word or thought that somehow attracts you or has your interest? If so, simply identify it and describe it in a few words.

## COMMENTARY:

The *Book of Wisdom*, part of the Apocrypha (=Old Testament books accepted in the Catholic Bible, but generally not included in Protestant Bibles), is also known as the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Many scholars believe this book was the last book of the Old Testament to be written, placing its writing around 50 BC. Today the passage we reflect upon falls within the section of this book where we hear King Solomon offering prayers of praise for the gift of wisdom. Solomon clearly identifies wisdom as a gift exceeding all others in value. To more fully understand this section from the *Book of Wisdom*, we must do two things: one, understand the motives and actions of Solomon as he seeks wisdom; and two, examine and understand the verses of this book that both precede and follow today's reading. Solomon, the third king of Israel and successor of King David, his father, was a man with faults, of which there were many. Yet, even with his many faults Solomon remained a man of prayer, who prayed not for earthly power and wealth, but for wisdom. In verses 1 – 6 of chapter 7, we hear Solomon recounting his birth, a birth he identifies as nothing special or unique; he was a mortal like everyone else. With this realization, Solomon concludes that, if he is just a mere mortal like everyone else, it’s all the more reason that he ought to be a man of prayer, to be in relationship with God, if he is to be a good king. Solomon also realizes that, in prayer, wisdom is to be sought above all other gifts – thus we hear Solomon in today's reading prayerfully seeking wisdom. Verses 22 – 30 offer us insight into why Solomon is seeking wisdom in his role as king of Israel. These verses list all the attributes of wisdom, attributes Solomon identifies as things that would make him a better king. Therefore, Solomon prays for wisdom, believing that this gift from God will ensure he will be a better king for the people of Israel.

The Gospel today will reveal the cost of discipleship in order to follow Jesus completely. We meet the unnamed rich man who was filled with excitement over the possibility of following Jesus, so much so that he bravely approaches Jesus. In response to the question concerning what the man must “do to inherit eternal life” (v. 17) Jesus issues an incredibly demanding challenge - “sell what you own” (v. 21). The man is now deeply disappointed and is in grief over the demand to sell his many possessions. However, Jesus does not end his message at this point of seeming hopelessness, lest those with earthly possessions think they cannot follow Jesus. Jesus presents his teaching on the Christian use of, and attitude towards, wealth, explaining that a camel can pass through the eye of a needle easier than a rich person can enter heaven (v. 25). Again, not wanting us to despair from this message, Jesus offers us great hope: “for God all things are possible” (v. 27). This presents us with a direct link to King Solomon in our first reading. Solomon realized he

must be a person of prayer, be in relationship with God, in order to be a better king = “for God all things are possible” (v. 27). Jesus tells us that to be good disciples we must be people of prayer, and be in relationship with God = “for God all things are possible” (v. 27). The conclusion: all things are possible with God if we are people of prayer, if we are in relationship with our God. The scriptures reveal this message very clearly, for as the second reading today from Hebrews says “the word of God is living and active” (v. 12).

(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the Commentary, to identify a newly discovered insight or an ideal newly described.)

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

### Wisdom 7:7-11      *“I prayed, and understanding was given me”*

- ✧ King Solomon makes evident that prayer can bring not only insight and understanding, but also graces and gifts from God. In the case of Solomon, he sought the gift of wisdom through prayer. How do you think King Solomon knew to seek the specific gift of wisdom? Do you think a significant period of prayer took place prior to his realization that he needed wisdom? What gifts do you seek in prayer? How do you know to seek a particular gift?

### Hebrews 4:12-13      *“The word of God is living and active”*

- ✧ What does it mean from your understanding that the word is living and active? Does this phrase mean that the actual word of God changes, or does perhaps our reception of the word change? Does a changing world, or our changing lives, impact how we receive and understand the word of God?

### Mark 10:17-30      *“For God all things are possible”*

- ✧ In order for all things to be possible for God what, if anything, must we do? Can God make all things possible even for someone who does not pray, who is not in a relationship with God?

## CARING-PRAYING TIME: (15-20 minutes)

**Word of the Week:** *“I called on God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me”*

### **Suggestion for the Week:**

While the first reading for today speaks about the gift of wisdom and King Solomon's great love and desire for this gift, it does not really tell us much about what the actual gift of wisdom looks like. What are the attributes of wisdom? Return to Chapter 7 of the *Book of Wisdom* and turn to verses 22- 30, the section sometimes referred to as “*The Nature of Wisdom*”. Spend some time praying upon and reflecting upon the attributes of wisdom. What, if anything, does this reveal to you about God's desire that we be blessed and graced with all that God has to offer? How could these many attributes of wisdom change us? How might these attributes change the world?

**Intercessions:** (Response: **Lord, hear our prayer**)

**Leader:** The wisdom of God is poured forth upon all those who believe, who know that prayer, and a relationship with God, can change individuals and the world. With this belief we place our prayers into the hands of God ...

**For all civil and religious leaders.** May they come to realize that the gift of wisdom, which comes from God, will make them better and more effective leaders, we pray ...

**For all those who experience injustice.** May the wisdom of God bring them the understanding and strength necessary to confront injustice, and may the same wisdom enlighten the minds of those who inflict injustice, we pray ...

**For those blessed with riches.** May they share the abundance that God has given them in order to help the world and its peoples experience true comfort and peace, we pray ...

**For all those who pray with the word of God.** May they experience the living and active power of the word of God in their lives, we pray ...

**For people of all faiths.** May we come together in peace and unity in order to make the world a place of peace and happiness, free from all religious bias and hatred, we pray ...

**For the deceased.** May the full hope and promise of the resurrection bring them to their heavenly homeland and share in the banquet of God, we pray ...

**How can we help you in prayer this week?**

**Let us pray** (*together*)

**We entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord,  
that, as you feed us with the nourishment  
which comes from your most holy word,  
we may become one with you in mind and heart.  
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God's favours on us today, we pray that all those in our influence be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray united as one, OUR FATHER...**

**Celebrating the Word**, Resurrection Ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. ([Celebrating the Word](#) was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R., deceased 2012). For information: Toll Free: 1-877-242-7935. website: [www.resurrectionists.ca](http://www.resurrectionists.ca) E-mail: [theword@resurrectionists.ca](mailto:theword@resurrectionists.ca) The Scripture version used in this commentary is the [New Revised Standard Version](#) (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA)