



Contributed by Brother John, C.R.

Bro. John has been with the Congregation of the Resurrection since 1969 and has previously served in high school and parish ministries, and most recently hospital, from which he retired after twenty- six years in Spiritual Care. He currently resides at Resurrection Manor, in Waterloo. He keeps active volunteering with St. Mary's Tiny Homes soup kitchen and maintaining our community cottage.

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time October 10, 2021

GATHERING TIME (*10 – 15 Minutes*)

Introduction to the Word:

I picked up a couple of books before I went on vacation this past summer, books that one of our members secured while on his sabbatical. The topic of aging and spirituality appeals to me at this stage in my life. The authors intertwined threads of scripture, psychology, common sense, and practical day-to-day examples to explain and teach. Time away, experiencing a totally different environment at a cottage, with no particular routine and certainly ignoring any clock, and feeling at one with nature and the environment, left me fully rested—even 'mellow', to borrow an expression from the Sixties. So I easily became engrossed in the books and the minds of the authors and the pages floated effortlessly by. So then, you can understand my 'spiritual holiday' abruptly crashing upon my returning home and the day-to-day world of routine, schedules, catch up, planning, appointments, etc. pushing out the serenity. You have probably had a similar experience when coming back to the reality of cares, issues, stress, worries—the real world.

As I read the gospel for today and reflected upon the man who approached Jesus with his question, I recall a line from one of those books. Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister (*Becoming Fully Human*) attributed a quote to the Kenyans who say, "Those who have cattle have care".

Warm-up Activity (*about 8 – 10 minutes*)

- a) When was the last time you experienced a deep, restful, quiet period of time?
What was the situation and the feeling?

- b) What helps you when you are anxious, preoccupied, or need a 'time out'?

Penitential Rite:

Our God is a generous giver, and he expects us, the object of his grace and blessing, to respond to that life he gives us by using well who we are and what we have.

Lord Jesus, help us to recognize your call to be faithful stewards, **Lord, have mercy.**
Christ Jesus, give us wisdom to use well our time, talents and treasure, **Christ, have mercy.**
Lord Jesus, fill us with hope to continue turning to you in our need, **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us pray:

Almighty God,
you have showered us with so many opportunities of grace,
as we respond to the call of your Son.
In our human condition,
help us to use all that we have and are
to be the best that we can be, and to not go away sad, as did the young man in the gospel.
May we not hesitate, and may we say 'Yes' to your call.
We ask this through your Son,
Our Lord Jesus Christ,
in union with the Holy Spirit.
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.)*

FIRST READING: Wisdom 7:7-11

I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon 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. His word can cut through our joints and marrow, until it discovers the desire and the thoughts of our 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 Honor your father and mother.’” And 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 all that 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 is it 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 humans, 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, 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**

Pause for a brief reflection on the scripture readings.

COMMENTARY:

The book of Wisdom is attributed to King David’s son, Solomon, who was regarded as the wisest man who ever lived. Written after the Babylonian captivity (and several hundred years after Solomon’s death), the author creates a personification of wisdom. The possession of wisdom required a close relationship to its source, a good relationship with God. And in this excerpt, Solomon prays to God for prudence and wisdom. Accepting his imperfect human nature, as an ordinary person with limitations, the writer seeks divine help and, as he prays to God, is gifted with the spirit of wisdom. Earthly treasure is of the earth, limited; but wisdom is from heaven, and therefore infinite. Radiance is preferred to light and is a reflection of the eternal light of God’s power of love and goodness. The virtue of wisdom is the beginning of holiness, giving us right judgment to understand and do the will of God. Like rich stones and minerals, it is not easily found. It comes with spiritual maturity, which is only attained through discipline, and putting the will of God before our own. It is not impossible to achieve, though, because we have the Holy Spirit with us to lead and guide us to wisdom. This helps give meaning and direction to everything we experience. Being a friend of God is to share wisdom, to see and understand reality as God does.

Paul, in the Second Reading, describes the power of the Word of God as “alive and active”. Employing the image of “a double-edged sword”, he portrays God’s Word as judgement and salvation activity. “Word” knows what a person said or did and cuts to his or her real intent and

judges accordingly. “Word” as piercing: it joins the believer to the crucified Christ in baptism and as victim in the act of salvation.

In the Gospel, Jesus responds to the young man’s question with reference to the commandments. The man has conformed his life to the socially oriented commands for human interaction but is lacking in something. Jesus cared for him, looked upon him lovingly, approvingly; then invited and challenged him to let go of his earthly possessions that were separating him from treasures in heaven. But the man’s love for the comfort and security provided by his possessions is a stumbling block. His emotional attachments cause him to be unwilling to follow Jesus’ words, just as they can prevent us from opening up to unexpected calls from God. Changes are very difficult when we are complacent and self-satisfied. Attachment to an occupation, opinion, privileged position, or career can impede us. Our agenda may be more important than serving others, doing good works, lacking time for family or our spiritual life and may leave us insensitive or arrogant to those around us. We suffer when attachments separate us from others and God. When we accept God’s love, trusting God for what we need, then we don’t need our possessions for security.

A very important Christian virtue is that of Hope, and it is founded on our faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. God the Father can do the impossible and the improbable. This is the concept Jesus taught His incredulous disciples, who reacted to the seeming impossibility of entering the kingdom of God. This Hope is the charism of the Congregation of the Resurrection, and a guide to our efforts in resurrecting society. “For God all things are possible” is not always evident, and often challenging to believe. Prayer and reflection may give us some insight as to when we went from discouragement to hope, from defeat to victory, from suffering to reconciliation, from crisis to opportunity. Such is the work of God, if we are open to doing His will. That is where we rely on the Wisdom of the First Reading.

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

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

How has God shown you his power, turning the impossible to the possible? How will your answer affect your prayer life this week?

How have your inner yearnings brought you to God? How has He satisfied those yearnings?

1. “All good things came to me” (Wisdom 7:7-11)

If we truly believe that God is generous, it is because we have experienced His generosity towards us. We can look back and recognize the “good things” that have come to us, perhaps at times beyond what we ever imagined.

- a) How has God’s blessing surprised me?
- b) How have I experienced a growth in wisdom in my life?
- c) Do the analogies associated with wisdom – gems, gold and silver - ring true to me?

2. “... until it discovers the desire and the thoughts of our heart.” (Hebrews 4:12-13)
We have all experienced the power of God’s Word in our lives. It speaks to our deepest hopes and needs.

- a) How do we identify the Word as a “double-edged sword”?
- b) What has the Word “cut through” in our lives?

3. “Come follow me” (Matthew 10:17-30)
We are all called to follow Jesus! At times we may feel we are doing ‘better’ than others – the young man in the Gospel sure did! In reality, we can always be and do more, and God’s grace allows us to grow and develop our response to His call.

- a) How would I have reacted to these words of Jesus, if they were directed to me?
- b) What would I have seen in the eyes of Jesus? Compassion? Judgement? Hope? Rejection?
- c) What have I done for “the sake of Christ ... and of the Gospel”?

CARING - PRAYING TIME (15-20 minutes)

1. **Word for the Week**: “Blessed are the poor in spirit”

2. **Suggestions for the Week**:

Let this week be a time to reflect on the call of Jesus to follow Him. Perhaps we feel like the young man in the gospel, that we are going to get a pat on the back and be applauded by Jesus for our faithfulness. But the words of Jesus tell us that we still have more to grow spiritually. We have more to do to give of ourselves to Jesus, as He gave of Himself for our salvation. Fortunately, we do not respond alone, but the grace of God is abundant and is ours. We can call upon the wisdom of God to help us see more clearly the areas of our lives that we still need to work on, to better witness to the life of Christ in us.

Take time to reflect on what our words and actions proclaim about what is our treasure.

3. **Intercessions**:

Our life with God depends on our communication with him, as does any relationship. Our prayer unites us to God, and puts us on the way to fulfilling the will of God. We are to conform our lives to God’s will, which is an act of grace, and not to declare *our* will to be *God’s* will.

That we may respond faithfully to the call of Christ, and overcome our fear and hesitation to say “Yes” to the Lord, we pray to the Lord ... **Lord, hear us**

May our faithful following of Jesus encourage others to approach the Lord, and strengthen their desire to do God’s will, we pray ... **Lord, hear us**

You are Father and Mother to us: inspire parents and caregivers to reveal your love to children, we pray... **Lord, hear us**

For the grace to seek the wisdom to act more in accordance with the will of God, we pray ... **Lord, hear us**

Lord, you teach us to serve and shun ambitious pride, help us to realize that our nobility lies in our relationship to you, we pray... **Lord, hear us**

May the word of God nourish and enliven us to be and do for Jesus Christ, we pray ...**Lord, hear us**

Lord, you taught your followers to travel lightly through life, call our consumer culture to a change of heart and to values that lead to life, we pray... **Lord, hear us**

That we may continue to seek the freedom to know, love and serve God better, we pray ... **Lord, hear us**

And how can we help you in prayer this week?

Let us pray:

Almighty God, we hear your call!
Help us to respond to that call, with the help of your grace,
and to be wise and prudent in our response to you.
We reach out to you
that we may follow you faithfully
and give of ourselves, as you have given yourself to us.
Remove fear and doubt from our minds and hearts,
so that we may not go away sad, but give of ourselves with joy.
This we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son,
in union with the Holy Spirit,
now and forever.
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: website: www.resurrectionists.ca. Email: provincialoffice@resurrectioncollege.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).