

**28<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; Cycle – B; Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> 2024**  
**Wisdom 7: 7-11; Hebrews 4: 12-13; Mark 10: 17-30**

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

The evil of greed sprouts in our hearts the moment when we are not content with what we have and what we are. Then we start thinking that the more possessions we have the happier we become. But the result is just opposite. The more we amass wealth, the more worried and unhappy we become. A greedy person does not see anyone around other than himself. The greed leads him to have unhealthy attachment to the material possessions, fame and power. This evil caused the total destruction of many kingdoms in the past, because their rulers were greedy after the wealth of other nations. Just to give one example, Alexander the Great, the Greek emperor, is the best example of greed. His greed was to conquer the whole world. In pursuit of it he opened tireless war against the neighboring nations. But he died at the age of 32. It seems that towards the end of his life he realized how foolish he was. So before death, he called his General and said to him, **"I desire that when my coffin is transported to the grave, the path leading to the graveyard shall display the wealth I collected," My last wish is that both my hands hang out of my coffin," Alexander said.** Thus he showed the world that he came empty handed and was going back empty handed.

In contrast to Alexander we have the story of another ancient ruler of Israel, King Solomon who preferred wisdom to silver and gold. According to 1Kings 3: 5-14 God gave him the chance to ask for anything he wanted. But instead of asking for riches, long life, treasures, glory and the heads of his enemies Solomon asked from God the understanding heart to judge the people and to distinguish right from wrong. In other words, he sought wisdom from God. In today's first reading from the Book of Wisdom, Solomon feels that he made the right choice and praises the greatness of wisdom. He considers wisdom as priceless and the source of happiness. **Solomon says, "I preferred her to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her."**

On the other hand in today's gospel we find a young man who thinks that his riches are everything in his life. Here Jesus makes a futile attempt to free this young man from his material bondage so that he may be able to serve God better. It is very clear from the gospel that the young man was a good person who observed the commandments and wanted to do more to attain eternal life. At the same time he was a slave of his possessions and he didn't want to share some of them with others. **In a way we can say that he didn't possess the wealth; rather the wealth has possessed him.**

When we read this passage, we may get the impression that Jesus demanded the young man to sell everything and keep nothing. Again we may reach a conclusion that the rich people are destined to eternal damnation. But in fact none of the above views is right. First of all, Jesus does not say that one should not possess any material riches at all. We know that without material possessions it is impossible to live in this world. In reality God has created everything in the world for man to enjoy and make use of it for a better living. The problem of the young man was that he was so selfish and so much attached to his wealth. He was looking for only his comforts and joy. Jesus was condemning that attitude. The rich people are justified, provided they are generous with their wealth and make use of it to make a difference in others who are less fortunate. Here Jesus implies that wealth which is not shared with the needy is a curse and it will take one away from God and fellowmen. The selfish use and hoarding of wealth will never bring joy to one; rather the worries and sadness.

**The founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha says, “The attachment to the material things is the cause of misery in one’s life.”** So he advised his followers to free themselves from the shackle of the material things. St. Gregory the great says, “The more we are involved in temporal things the more we are insensitive to the spiritual things.” *Jesus himself says, “But, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given you besides.” (Mt. 6: 33).* Mahatma Gandhi, the national leader of India once said, "**The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed,**"

If our material things become a hindrance to serve God and see our fellow beings with compassion and love, they are a curse for us. *Whereas, the joy of sharing our time, talents and wealth with the community or someone who is in need will not be snatched away from us in this world or in the world to come.* **St Basil the great gives us the importance of sharing in the following words: “The extra bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry; the coat unused in your closet belongs to the one who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the one who has no shoes; the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor.”** The lesson that we could get from the rich young man is that **we should not store up wealth on earth but we should store up treasures in heaven by doing what Jesus said to do, like helping the poor.**