

12TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

“...Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16)

Dear brothers and sisters, the anxiety of this young man, when he turned to Jesus, is the anxiety of many people today. What must I do to have eternal life? He received the answer, "sell what you possess and give to the poor...and come follow me" (Matt. 19:21).

It is interesting how hunters in South America catch monkeys. To do this, they use a pumpkin, banana, coconut, or other fruit, as bait, in a vessel or just a hole in the ground. A hole is made so that the monkey can push its paw there with outstretched toes. When the monkey puts its paw in the trap and grabs the bait, it will, of course, not be able to pull its paw out, because it would have to release the bait by compressing its toes. The problem is that the animal considers the prey its property. It does not want to part with the bait and accordingly, loses its freedom.

The meaning of the Gospel story, of the young rich man's encounter with Jesus, becomes clearer to us in the light of this story. This young man was something, like a monkey, with his hand in a trap, he held fast to his wealth.

Sometimes, we are like a monkey who does not want to let go of its prey to gain freedom. Animals have an instinct, and we humans should avoid such traps. Like animals, we are willing to sacrifice our freedom for material things. Jesus tried to explain this to the young man mentioned in today's Gospel that for him, wealth had become an idol that could destroy him.

When Jesus began to teach in the temple in Jerusalem, he said to the Jews, who listened to him, "Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. ...But, because I tell the truth, you do not believe me" (John 8, 43-45).

Many people believe that happiness requires good health, good earnings, and prosperity. They see themselves based on popularity and beautiful appearance. If a possession makes a person perfect, then why do we need more faith in God? He who sees his dignity and love in physical things reduces his value from the person to the level of a material thing that can be bought and sold. Quite often you can hear this, they really love me

not for who I am, but for what I have, they love the things, the jewelry that is on me.

There lived two faithful friends from school. But over time, their paths diverged. One stayed with his mistress, became a farmer, and the other moved to the city, where he received a higher education. They did not see each other for a long time. Finally, the man from the city visited his friend in the village. Both were very happy to meet. They talked about everything, but the guest noted that even during the conversation, his friend was constantly focused on his horse, praising, stroking, and cleaning him. "I see you love your horse." "Oh, yes, he is my life." "And how much time do you spend on your horse?" "I'll tell you the truth, in order for a horse to look good, you need to dedicate up to two hours every day. I like to be with the horse, to feed and clean it". The guest then asked, "How much time do you devote to your immortal soul?" After a moment of silence, the man lowered his head and said, "but, as you know, often a person doesn't even think about having a soul." Then his friend said to him, "Forgive me, my friend, but if you had devoted so much time to your soul as to your horse, you would have been truly happy. And in this case, I would rather be your horse than your soul."

Whether your life is presented like a quiet haven, crossing a clear blue sea or is challenged by stormy waves, one must constantly have their eyes on eternity. He who has used earthly life to accumulate riches will leave those riches in the transition to eternity. He who has used earthly life to obtain honors and glory will be deprived of a cruel death. He who has used earthly life to work for the salvation of his soul will take his salvation with him into eternity, and in heaven, he will forever rejoice in the acquisition he has made on earth.

The Lord points to complete freedom for all who are free from their passions. Once the Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible asked a nobleman about where his estate was. To which the wise nobleman replies, "Through the hands of the poor I sent him to Heavenly Father."

In the same way, we, dear believers, obtain treasures in heaven through prayer, through works of charity, and through love for our neighbors.

I wish you peace and blessed days.

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