

St Pius-St Anthony 28th Sunday Ordinary Time Year B2nd

Has this ever happened to you leaving your house, you pick up your keys (gotta have them), walk thru the kitchen, grab a cup of coffee. Oh, yeah and that little stack of papers for the office, oh and the mail too, to drop in box on way, and the plate to return to Sue at work, go ahead and slip the battery charger in your pocket because phone has been acting up lately-oh you do have the phone on you right-put it on the clip? And then make it to the door, and guess what, **'How do you get the door open?'** You don't-you have set the coffee down, spill it in the process, of course, 2 times put it down, open door, pick up-go out, then put it down and close the door, and finally you are out the door until you get to the truck and then have to repeat it all over. All through that, you pray you don't get asked by someone, **"You got a free hand?"** Because you know what-you don't!

That is what Jesus is letting the man in on with the gospel today. To get through heaven's door, your hands must be free. We can't be all preoccupied with weighed down with all our stuff, to make it through the door to eternity. In order to receive all that God has for me, I can't have my hands full with my stuff already. When we hear that the man has been so good about following moral commandments in this world but yet Jesus challenges him a little more about preparing himself for heaven, Jesus is saying that he is not ready for the next level because our hearts must be free of the earthly stresses that stuff down here brings with it (getting more, being so possessive preoccupied with it). Jesus is testing him to see whether his heart is truly set on heavenly life, or still hung up burdened down with comfortable, pleasurable (luxurious) things here on earth. It's like he is asking, "Is heaven more important than the next new thing on earth- whatever one's luxury is, new golf clubs or cooking pans, a new ride, game box, phone-each person has their luxury. Well, God asks us "Do you have a free hand take my hand or open heaven's door?" Or is your hand gripping that earthly luxury? Something stands out about this man in the gospel (look at his approach). I think Jesus knows him from somewhere else-maybe he has seen him in the marketplace- maybe the man owns the market, because he sounds like a good salesman-marketer. Notice his introduction, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" A double flattery in one sentence: 1) **Good**, you are Jesus and you are so accomplished & 2) you know how to **achieve** eternal life. Not to mention he knelt down in front of Jesus: that commands attention. This is why Jesus pushes back with his otherwise confusing comment "Why do you call me good?" But that is not what the man is after – Jesus even says, "I know you know." But, I find this man is trying to 'best' Jesus; this is an approach to sell or buy him out. Maybe he is recruiting Jesus to his company, or pulling him in as a consultant, or breaking into Jesus network-neighborhood, this man is working Jesus, but Jesus knows it-I love how it says, that before Jesus answered back, (Mk 10:21) it says Jesus, "looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in

one thing....” Jesus knows this guy is good in his business, yes, socially he is smooth, he is successful, seemingly he has got everything together, but that may be the problem- he doesn’t have everything (what is going on in his heart) Maybe he has tried to have everything--accumulate it all, trade it all, buy up the city, put his name on everything he’s touched), but he is coming to Jesus about something missing (all this is not all there is). And this is what Jesus knows about him and why he takes a second, to look at him and love him, and then let him in on a secret that stuff won’t buy eternity; his excess luxury hasn’t made him free- it has tied him down to earth even more- he doesn’t own his possessions, they own him. They aren’t serving him, he is serving them. So, Jesus asks him to let them go-sell & give to poor, then come follow Him. And at least for the moment, that is too much. He walks away from that deal (we are hopeful people. So he leaves only for now, as I think he returns after thinking and reviewing his life-this may be Joseph of Arimathea who ends up giving a spacious tomb plot to Jesus at burial (John 19:38) or Nicodemus (who happened to have ready access 100 pounds of myrrh aloe-John 19:39) or he could be any business contact of Mary (who anointed Jesus) who always happens to have access to extravagant oils (John 12:5 says 300 denarii worth). But at the moment, this man’s hands are too full of his own importance and his own stuff, to take up all that Jesus is offering him-eternal life So the question for us may be, what is in our hands that may prevent us from receiving what God wishes to give-heaven’s eternity?

As you know from mailings already from the Bishop’s office, this is Disciples Response Weekend in every parish all across the Diocese. So we will hear the Bishop’s appeal now (Play Bishop’s Message).

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

In today’s Gospel, the young man simply walked away. In fact, the gospel says that he walked away sad. Sad because he genuinely desired to do what was right – and yet the demand he thought was too great. Aren’t we all guilty of walking away sometimes? The teachings of Christ are so simple that they can be understood by a child, and yet they can be so complex that we want to bend those teachings to accommodate our lifestyle! The young man in today’s Gospel dutifully went to Church and was a rules follower, but we are always being called into a deeper relationship with Christ. Today’s Gospel begs the question, what are the things and the attitudes I’m holding onto so tightly that I’m choosing THEM over generosity, kindness and humility? The first reading celebrates the beauty of choosing wisdom and how her guidance blesses us with spiritual richness. In Hebrews the readings describe truth as a double edge sword, and the discerning Christian spirit recognizes and lives the truth with their attitudes, actions, and decisions. Every week at this Mass we hear Christ calling us to be better versions of ourselves and to let the power of this Mass change how we live our life. Let us pray for each other that we are inspired by the challenge of today’s Word, and that we have the desire to respond, instead of merely walking away. This weekend is the Disciples Response Fund Sunday, and I ask all who can, to please support the work of the Church of Western Kentucky. I am so appreciative for all the financial support you showed the Diocesan effort last year. As the pandemic unfolded last year we saw extensive unemployment, school and churches and many businesses were closed at times. From month to month and even week to week we did not know how this would affect each of us personally and as families. The diocese and all of our parishes were called upon to respond in charity to vast human needs. AND, because of the continued generosity of our people we were able to do that. Parish income and our annual diocesan appeal were down some – but not as much as one might expect during such an unprecedented crisis. What we found is that many realized how blessed they were and stepped up to offer support when we knew some of our neighbors could not help as usual. Thank you! Please read the mailing sent to your home because it has more information about the services you helped provide. The ushers will take up a special collection today if you brought your gift with you (there are also pledge cards in the pew). Over 4,200 of you contributed last year and I am deeply appreciative of the work we are accomplishing because of your generosity. I realize that many of you are also generous with your parish and with other ministries you also feel called to financially support. Included in each mailing to your home is a card for your prayer intentions. They are prayed over each day by me and by staff during our morning prayer and Mass. Thank you in advance for your prayerful response and generosity. And let us remember everyone in prayer who dedicates their lives in service of the Catholic Church of Western Kentucky. Thank You, Bishop William Medley.