

28th Ordinary Sunday
October 11, 2020
“Wealth, Poverty, and Faith”

Is 25:6-10
Phil 4:12...19
Mt 22:1-14

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

One of the very real consequences of wealth and abundance is that we can lose our touch with other realities. We can begin to take many things for granted. In our complacency, we can forget about truly important things. Wealth and abundance can make us feel very secure. We can afford all the necessary things like food, clothing, shelter, life and health insurance, and whatever our children need. We can even have investments and plans for our retirement days.

Of course, none of this is bad. However, we can lose sight of how difficult life can be for people with less – And we can overlook and even fail to see our real shortcomings, poverty of soul, and, especially, our sins! We can even begin to have less sensitivity toward others who have less – We can forget that we can have real obligations in their regard.

On the other hand, people who must struggle economically usually take nothing for granted. For them, life brings many hardships. Moreover, when someone blesses them, they are most appreciative – They do all they can to show that appreciation – and use well the favor or the goodness that is extended to them. Thus, they honor the one who was their benefactor.

Isaiah spoke to the Chosen People who had fallen from much of the favor that they, originally, had with God. There was unrest throughout the land. The northern kingdom of Israel went to war against Assyria, was conquered, and forced into exile in Assyria. The southern kingdom of Judah was torn politically and spiritually. Should they ally themselves with Egypt and other countries against Assyria – or should they listen to God’s prophet who counseled otherwise? They had been in turmoil, politically, for several years – mainly because they took for granted and then abused the favor they had with God.

So, Isaiah spoke to the remnant who were poor and had no clout, politically speaking. Today he tells them that there would come a time when there will be an abundance. There will be the reign of God in an everlasting kingdom. There will be no more lies or duplicity – no more webs of unknowing or uncertainty. People will be authentic and honest with one another – And there will be no more fighting or war! However, it is important to remember that only the remnant, most of whom were poor, believed this prophecy!

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us that the kingdom of heaven will be like a wedding banquet a king gave for his son. Unfortunately, many of the wealthy and privileged in the parable were not interested. First, they ignored the invitation – Then, they made excuses – Some went so far as to abuse and even kill the king's emissaries. So, the king annihilated them and destroyed their city!

However, the celebration still needed guests and participants who would appreciate the feast. Thus, the king had everyone brought in – including those who had little or nothing at all to recommend themselves. They all came and made themselves presentable except for one man. He dishonored his host by not wearing a wedding garment – And, as a result, he was thrown out into a darkness of no hope!

The wedding garment is the grace of goodness we must keep in our soul if we expect to be welcomed before God. Yes, it means that we must clean up our act – We must break with sin and all attachment to sin – And if we are blessed with abundance and wealth, we must always keep God first. Whether rich or poor, we must not let our wealth or poverty distract us from our real purpose in life – and to the eternal destiny to which we are called.

Finally, Brothers and Sisters, St. Paul has a timely message for everyone, whether we are rich or poor, have an abundance or very little. What Paul says is that these material things or lack thereof are not what is really important. Many of us could actually live with a whole lot less – Many, could probably use a whole lot more. But what is important is that we trust in God. It is what is in our soul and spirit that really counts.

Consequently, do we keep God before us no matter what? Do we use the gifts we have for others and bless them with what we have been given? Do we keep our faith and hope, in our deprivation, and appreciate even the little we have? How we live each moment of our time on Earth will determine our place in the kingdom – or whether we get there at all!

So, let us pray, today, that we are already wearing the wedding garment when we are personally called to the heavenly banquet feast of Jesus, the Son!

Amen.

October 11, 2020

Msgr. Russell G. Terra