

28th Sunday Ordinary Time—October 13, 2024

A wealthy man had just bought a fancy new car, and was eager to show it off to his colleagues, when a large truck came out of nowhere and took off the driver's side door with him standing right there. "NOOO!" he screamed, because he knew that no matter how good a mechanic tried to fix it, it would never be the same. Finally, a cop came by, and the wealthy man ran up to him yelling, "MY BENTLEY DOOR WAS JUST RUINED BY SOME FOOLISH DRIVER!!!"

"You're a wealthy man, aren't you?" asked the policeman.

"Yes, I am, but what does that have to do with my car?!?!" the man asked.

"HA! You wealthy people are always so materialistic. All you care about is your possessions. I bet you didn't even notice that your left arm is missing, did you?" the cop said.

The wealthy man looked down at his side and exclaimed, "MY ROLEX!"

I wanted to share with you some interesting statistics about possessions in the United States:

1 in 14 Americans currently rent a storage unit.

The self-storage industry is a \$24 billion business

The average American home contains 300,000 items. (Who wants to go and start counting to prove the stats?)

Americans spend about \$1.2 trillion a year on non-essential items.

Today in the Gospel, we hear Jesus say, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle than a rich man to enter heaven. At our homiletics this week, we talked about the eye of the needle that Jesus was speaking about. It seems that there is some debate over if there really was such a passageway in Jerusalem known as the "eye of the needle". I wanted to research this a little and this is what I found:

According to one tradition, the "eye of the needle" referred to a gate in the wall of Jerusalem. During the day, there was a large gate that was open through which a camel could easily pass. But at night, the larger gate was closed and there was a smaller opening in the center of the gate that allowed people to pass through. A camel, however, could not pass through that smaller opening unless it got down on its knees, had its load removed from its back, and then crawled through.

In referencing this Gospel message, Saint Anselm states that "the rich should not be able to pass along the narrow way that leads to life, till he had put off the burden of sin, and of riches and humbled themselves.

We too need to think about all the excess things that we have. A humbling experience for us may be going through your electronic payments or your checkbook over the past six months to see where you are spending your money. Our money and time go to things we care about, but they also direct where our passion resides.

In the book “In Pursuit” (a book that I am using for my Hunting for God retreats this year) the author writes: There is nothing inherently wrong about investing in a truck, a hunting lease or a new bow. Our possessions are truly valuable, but we must not let them become the most important things in our lives, unless we choose to use them for the kingdom of God. If most of our resources are being spent on playthings for ourselves, our heart is not going to form properly. Alexander Solzhenitsyn wisely writes, “We always pay dearly for chasing after what is cheap.”

The writer concludes, “If you want your heart to change, grow and develop a kingdom-oriented passion, Jesus gives us a very simple starting point: begin investing your time into the things of God, and you can then expect your heart to follow.

I challenge you this week to look at where you have been spending your money and your time most recently as see if you are using your possessions all for yourself or if you are using them for the growth of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Maybe it is time to make a few changes so that you can accept Jesus’ challenge to leave those heavy possessions behind and go to follow Him.

Prayer—Father, give me a heart that is committed to your purposes. Help me spend and invest my treasure and resources into your kingdom, even making decisions that may not seem acceptable by this world’s eyes, to serve you and advance your purposes. Help me to view my money, time and possessions from the prospective of eternity. Amen.