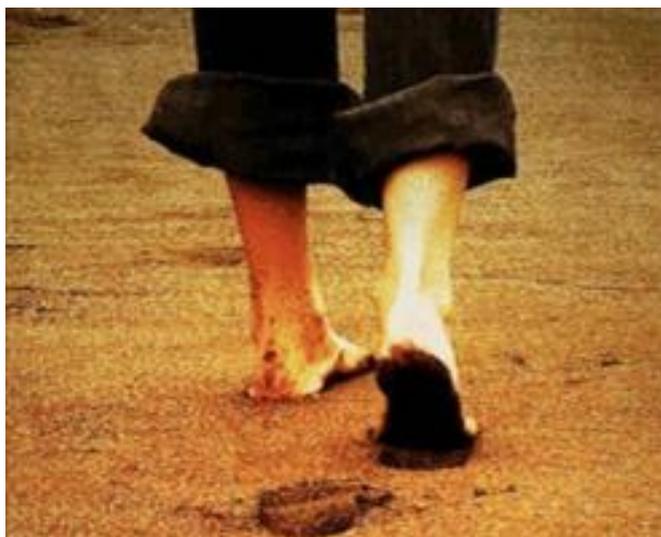


Commentary to the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time:



What Do We Need?

How sad! The man had the wonders of the Lord right there in front of him. He could have become one of the Lord's closest disciples. Jesus heard him say that he had kept the commandments. Jesus knew that he was a good man. He loved him. But he also knew that something was holding the man back. His possessions were the reason for his life. All his life he had worked hard to have a lot, or, perhaps, he had been born into a wealthy family and had been falsely taught that the family's wealth would guarantee his happiness. The man thought that he was on the top of society. Then he received a shock. True greatness was being offered to him. Was he willing to change the focus of his life? Was he willing to step away from his material possessions? Evidently not. He left the Lord saddened.

We have been raised in a society that values wealth above all else. We know that is not true. We know that the love of our families, our children, and through them, our Lord, are our real values, but we easily fall for the lie that happiness can be purchased. We easily confuse our wants with our needs.

We want too much. We need very little. We want the big house, the expensive car, the boat, etc. But we don't need all of that. And I am not just speaking to you. I am speaking to myself. I just bought a new car. I needed one, but I wanted a really nice one. The question I have to ask myself, though, would be, if the new car gets damaged, or stolen, would I be terribly upset? Probably, and that would be reasonable. But would I be destroyed? I certainly hope not. If the loss of a material thing has an effect upon my basic attitude to life, then the desire for the material has taken priority over the real need of my life. All I need is the Love of God. And it is there for me in so many ways, none of which have to do with the quality of the wheels I am driving.

How about you? What is it that would destroy you if you lost it? I am sure that there is plenty that would upset you if a hurricane came through, and your house was gone. That's reasonable. But would

you be destroyed if your house were destroyed? Would you wonder if life was worth living? I know most of you well enough to know that would not be the case. You love your family far more than your stuff. Your main concern would be with them. And you love your God more than anything the world can come up with. As long as you have him, you have all you need.

But what if the unthinkable were to happen? What if we were to lose a loved one? This has certainly happened for many of us here. Parents have passed away, or your spouse, a close friend, and the worst of all tragedies, perhaps a child has died. If any of this were to happen to us, would we be destroyed? I have observed so many of you dealing with the worst. You go through deep grief, but you refuse to be destroyed. That is because you have what you really need. You have faith. We have faith. We have God. We entrust our loved ones to Him. He will care for them, and for us. We may mourn and weep in this valley of tears, but we know that our pain here is temporary when it is united to our faith in God.

Recently, I was in New York City with a priest friend. We were able to visit the 9-11 Memorial. I'm sure you have seen pictures of it. There are 2 vast pools of water in the footprints of the two towers. On the edges are the names of the 2,900+ lives that were lost. But we noticed there were no religious symbols. Not Stars of David, Moslem symbols or Crosses. Now, I am sure that the designer was making a statement regarding renewal of life through water, but the more I thought about it, the more I came to the realization that without faith, lives just wash away.

Solomon asked for wisdom. So do we. We need the wisdom to allow our lives to be so centered on Jesus Christ that no matter what challenges and even crises life throws at us, we will still keep growing in His Love. What we need is the continual growth of Christ's Presence within us. What we need is to grow so Christ like that His Life and our lives merge so that we cannot see where He begins, and we end. What we need is to be made into an everlasting gift to the Father. When we strive for this, we strive for wisdom.

Why does God love us? Why? He loves us because he sees the His Son in us. The Father loves the Son and all who belong to Him. What we need is really a Whom.

We need Jesus.

We need Love.

We need God.

All three are the same.

Fr. Joseph Pellegrino, SJ