- Imagine the irony of the scene we just heard. The ragged, dusty band of Jesus and His disciples beginning a journey, and a rich young man in his fine clothes throws himself at the feet of this wandering preacher...either having heard of, or witnessed, Jesus' teaching and miracles.
- All full of youthful enthusiasm, he calls out: "Good teacher!"
- And Jesus replies: "Why do you call me good. No one is good but God alone."
- Jesus throws a bit of cold water on him, because the young man may be getting caught up in Jesus' miracles rather than assessing what Jesus calls His followers to do.
- And Jesus is telling him: "Do not be dependent upon emotion, lest initial eagerness fade and you wander from the path. Look to God alone."
- Jesus uses that theme often...in the parable of the sower, when the thorns of the world choke the growth of the Word ((Mt 13:22), or when He says: "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)
- For us, Jesus' comment has a double meaning, because we know that He IS God, and thus all good.
- Therefore, to us "in the know", Jesus is asking: "You who profess to know me...are YOU truly ready to follow me?

- The wise will ask with that young man: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"
- "Follow the commandments." In other words: "You already know what to do for the most part. Follow what God has taught."
- "I have done these things", the young man replies.
- "But you <u>lack</u> one thing. Go sell what you have and give to the poor."
- Jesus ushers in a new age...emphasizing that it is <u>insufficient</u> to simply not offend; one must go forth and give of oneself and help others in need.

- But the young man became sad, and went away, because he loved his wealth and possessions. He was already comfortable and complacent where he was...but now a new, uncomfortable, unanticipated expectation was lain upon him.
- What did he finally do? We aren't told.

•

- Thus we are left with an unanswered trepidation. Will the young man be too attached to the world to do what is needed for eternal life...or will he give himself to Christ?
- But....do WE? It is here in this Gospel that we see ourselves.
- Am I a liar and a hypocrite when I say I love God and Jesus and follow His Word? To some extent, at least, I am forced to admit: "Yes".
- Receiving infinite blessings, I give back so very little.
- Being loved totally, and yet I will hate. Forgiven so much, yet I do not forgive. Hearing the Word of God, I do not listen.
- Remember the widow's mite? She gave even her last two coins, and yet Jesus says that she gave more than all the wealthy because of the greater sacrifice.
- Consider the ISIS victims, or the recent Oregon shooting—those who stood with Christ even though proclaiming their faith meant the deaths.
- In my heart I cry out with St. Paul: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do...I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:15-24 RSV)

- Who will deliver me, indeed? Who will help me? None other than He whom I offend: God Himself. Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth & the Life...the Wisdom of God.
- For as we heard in our first reading: "I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me."
- How much this sounds like <u>Jesus</u> when <u>He</u> says: "If you...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13 RSV)

- But...what. IS. wisdom?
- Is wisdom devoting oneself to the unimportant...to things that perish?...even to things to our detriment...and even to our demise?
- Or is not wisdom rather seeking <u>truth</u>...the <u>good</u>...that which benefits us and others most deeply and even eternally?

- Wisdom is what God gives to us...if we ardently ask for it, and seek it...in the scriptures and in the teaching of the Church, which is itself guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Wisdom is what Jesus offered to the young man: 1) Avoid evil; and, 2) Do good with what you have been given...including forgiveness of others.
- What is that wisdom worth? Our first reading: "I preferred her [wisdom] to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her…because all gold, [compared to her] is [nothing but] sand…Beyond [even] health and beauty I loved wisdom…all good things came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands."
- What is that wisdom worth? Eternal life.
- Because, as Jesus asks, what does it matter if we gain the whole world and yet lose our souls. As the poet said: "The only real tragedy is if we do not become saints."

- Remember John Astor IV?...the very wealthy man who lived in absolute luxury...who went down with the Titanic?
- As the icy fingers of the North Atlantic tightened their grip, what riches would he <u>not</u> have given even for a tiny lifeboat?
- Well...our earthly lives ARE a Titanic...sinking inevitably. And wisdom—Christ—is our lifeboat...to save us and take us home.

•

- Physical pleasures? Gone in a moment...like a wind...and like a strong wind, they may leave destruction in their path.
- Fame, wealth, power? They leave us simply wanting <u>more</u> fame, <u>more</u> wealth, <u>more</u> power...those wolves which grow hungrier with every feeding.
- There is not enough wealth...not enough fame...not enough power, to vanquish our insatiable greed for those things. Never enough, yet nor do they bring happiness. The highest rates of suicide are in the ranks of the rich and famous.

- But <u>true</u> wisdom seeks <u>God; true</u> wisdom is in two simple phrases: Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. These are the only things which truly satisfy.
- And the wisdom of this is found in true, sincere and quiet prayer, in Scripture, and in the teaching of the Church.
- We cannot find happiness in seeking ourselves; we <u>only</u> find true joy and happiness in serving others: God first, and then our neighbor.
- What does Wisdom Himself tell us to do? To follow the commandments, and to give of ourselves in love for the good of others...as He told that young man.
- Need we fear loss? Never...for He who tells us to give freely of ourselves also tells us: "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who

will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age... and eternal life in the age to come."

• "Lord...what must <u>I</u> do to inherit eternal life?"

Reading 1 Wis 7:7-11

I prayed, and prudence was given me;
I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.
I preferred her to scepter and throne,
and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her,
nor did I liken any priceless gem to her;
because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand,
and before her, silver is to be accounted mire.
Beyond health and comeliness I loved her,
and I chose to have her rather than the light,
because the splendor of her never yields to sleep.
Yet all good things together came to me in her company,
and countless riches at her hands.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17

R. (14) Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart. Return, O LORD! How long? Have pity on your servants!

R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Fill us at daybreak with your kindness, that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days. Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us, for the years when we saw evil.

R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Let your work be seen by your servants and your glory by their children; and may the gracious care of the LORD our God be ours; prosper the work of our hands for us! Prosper the work of our hands!

R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Reading II Heb 4:12-13

Brothers and sisters:

Indeed the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword,

penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.

No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.

Gospel

Mk 10:17-30 or 10:17-27

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; vou shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; vou shall not bear false witness: you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor

Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples.

"How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"

The disciples were amazed at his words.
So Jesus again said to them in reply,
"Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said,
"For human beings it is impossible, but not for God.

All things are possible for God."

Peter began to say to him,
"We have given up everything and followed you."
Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you,

there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come."

or

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up. knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill: vou shall not commit adultery: you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,
"How hard it is for those who have wealth
to enter the kingdom of God!"
The disciples were amazed at his words.
So Jesus again said to them in reply,
"Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!
It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle
than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."
They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves,
"Then who can be saved?"
Jesus looked at them and said,
"For human beings it is impossible, but not for God.
All things are possible for God."