

My Brothers and Sisters,

In today's Gospel, when the young man asked Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life, Jesus named several of the Ten Commandments. The young man responded that he had kept all of these from his youth. We are told that Jesus then looked at the young man with love and said, "*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.*" The young man's face fell, and he went away sad because he had many possessions.

This passage is often used in Masses for vocations to the priesthood or religious life. Some see this passage as the basis for the vow of poverty religious take. However, I think it applies to all of us. First, Jesus asks more of us as Christians than simply keeping the Ten Commandments. The more Jesus asks of us is loving God first and loving our neighbor as ourselves. For example, the parable of the Last Judgment reminds us that we are called to minister to those in need, especially to the marginalized. As Christians we are called not just to avoid evil but to do positive good to and for others.

Second, in telling the young man to sell all he had and give to the poor, Jesus was telling him that not to fall victim to the idols of society. The three idols throughout history have been money and possessions, power and prestige, and pleasure. There is nothing wrong with any of them. They only become wrong when we make any or all of them more important than God and others and our authentic selves.

For example, in today's first reading from Wisdom, Solomon valued wisdom over power, riches, and pleasure. The wisdom Solomon valued was God's wisdom. Wisdom is to see as God sees and to value what God values. Seeing as God sees and valuing what God values would lead Solomon to become the person God called him to be and us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves.

However, my favorite part of the story is when we are told that Jesus looked at the young man with love. Christian morality is covenant morality, our response to the love of God who first loved us in Christ. Although the young man did not accept Jesus' invitation, I would argue that Jesus love actually empowered the young man to say yes.

In today's reading from Hebrews, the author wrote, "*No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.*" This is a biblical way of saying that God alone knows the secrets of our hearts.

Both human and divine, Jesus was the greatest applied psychologist. He addressed the same theme as the author of Hebrews. In Luke's Gospel, he said, "*Everything now covered up will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear*" [12:2; NJB]. Experience teaches us that we want to keep hidden the things of which we are ashamed, but we are happy to share the good we do, which again is exactly what Jesus wanted us to do: "*Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father*" [Mt. 5:16].

My brothers and sisters, my first pastor told me a story that I have never forgotten. Dr. Miracle was a non-Catholic psychiatrist in Indianapolis. Dr. Miracle served in World War II. He told Fr. Noll that when he was in the military, he initially wondered why he had so many fewer Catholic patients than non-Catholic patients. He finally figured out that it was because Catholics had confession, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He said that most of what he dealt with in his patients was rooted in guilt. Both personal and family secrets can be destructive. In the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus extends to us his forgiving, healing, reconciling love.