

Homily for
Sunday, October 14 2018
28th Sunday in Ordinary time
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Our Second Reading today reminds us that God's word has the sharpness of a sword, and, we can add, the precision of a scalpel: it finds precisely where the tumors of our life are, it knows where to make the necessary incision that makes our delusions fall away, but ultimately, it is we who must choose to do the surgery, to go under the knife. With that in mind, consider the teaching of our first reading today. The Wisdom of God is what we need; everything else is an investment in that for which we're truly searching. The Wisdom of God is described as discovering the love of your life; everything else pales in comparison. Wisdom is more valuable than political power. Wisdom is more valuable than material wealth. Wisdom is more valuable than physical health or beauty. Wisdom is the true path to success. Paul is reminding us that nothing is hidden to the eyes of the Lord, and he can reveal things within us to which even we are blind. If the Wisdom of God in the First Reading is described as a splendor that even light itself can't compare, the Word of God in the Second reading is described as a sharp word that cuts through any pretensions or illusions we may have about ourselves or others. The Word of God is always meant to reveal something, expressing the Wisdom of God so that we see ourselves, the world, and

others in its light. Our Lord doesn't see himself offering the Rich Young Man in today's Gospel pain and sacrifice; he is offering him the path to a deeper love for God in exchange for the love he's already received and shown. When the Young Man tries to flatter Our Lord a little, Jesus is quick to chide him about his motives for such praise and redirects his thoughts to God. Jesus is telling him that it doesn't matter how rich he is, or whether he is good or bad; God's love for him is constant. If success and moral living don't help us grow in our love for God, they don't go far enough; they will not satisfy us. If the Rich Young Man had taken today's First Reading (which did exist in his time) and replace the expressions "prudence" and "Wisdom" with "the love of God," everything would have snapped into clarity. The wisdom he was truly seeking from Jesus was an awareness of the love God had for him, in which every other good thing would pale. He may have seen Our Lord as asking a costly sacrifice, but Jesus was asking him to invest the fruits of his success and goodness into something greater and for something greater. Our Lord looks upon us with love no matter what we do, but he also invites us to follow him, draw closer to him, and love him more.

Many times we see that through a filter of losing something, sacrificing something. Our first reading puts this into perspective for us. The Wisdom of God is what we need; everything else is an investment in that for which we're truly searching. Sometimes a routine test may stumble across a tumor starting to form, but tumors usually stay hidden

until their adverse effects prompt the doctor to take a closer look. Tumors start to form hiddenly and gradually. The symptoms often start that resemble other, less serious illnesses. Our Lord in today's Gospel gave the Rich Young Man a terminal prognosis if he didn't seek the right "treatment." The Rich Young Man did not know his love for wealth was a tumor in his spiritual life. God isn't saying wealth in this life is bad, but he is saying to get above anything that gets in the way of your relationship with God. He looks upon this Rich Young Man with love before he asks something of him that he knew would be difficult. This story is our reminder that if we try to please God and seek eternal life a moment will come when we ask a potentially scary question, just like the Rich Young Man did today, "What do I still lack, Lord?" He'll for sure answer us precisely!

We know Our Lord teaches us that we must lose our life to save it and to take up our cross every day and follow him. The cross implies that tough choices for the sake of Our Lord must be made. If something separates us from God, it separates us from eternal life and any true happiness we could have achieved. Under the weight of this idolatry it's no wonder that the Rich Young Man went off sad when he didn't opt for Christ: deep down he knew eternal life was at stake, and he blew it. He couldn't see beyond his possessions. But Jesus could. How can we learn to trust in that; to know that what God has in store for us is much greater than what we see. How can we remember, always, that our eyes truly

cannot see what God has ready us, and to trust that whatever it is it will be for Good? Start now. Don't be afraid to ask Jesus the question today as you come to receive him: "Lord, what do I lack?" No matter how costly it appears, it will lead to eternal happiness for you and for others. Take the next step and trust in the Wisdom of God.