

## From The Pastor

This weekend we are taking a collection for the Priest's Retirement Fund. This collection is for the priests that serve in the Archdiocese of Detroit who have reached the retirement age of seventy years. This is not the collection for the Retirement for Religious, which has been taken for the last twenty years or so. Diocesan priests are responsible for their own financial upkeep upon retirement. Part of their support comes from a monthly retirement check from the diocese. This pension fund is currently under funded. Three years ago, parishes began paying a much larger sum to the Archdiocese to bring the fund in line with the larger number of priests retiring. Today's collection is an effort to help defray the increased cost to the parish. All monies given will stay with the parish to support the cost of their priest(s). Your generosity is both an act of appreciation for the years of service and ministry of your pastor, as well as a help to defray the cost of his retirement when that time should come. Thank you for your generous support.

I am aware that these second collections can get to be a burden. Pastors don't like to have to run them anymore than people like to see them come up. On the other hand, they are the reality of faith communities in support of the many and various works and responsibilities of the larger Church. I make note of this now because these second collections seem to come in bunches. Next weekend will be the annual Propagation of the Faith appeal. The first of November we will take a collection to assist the poor through St. Vincent DePaul. I have given SVDP money through the office, but the increased need these days necessitates that we call upon the faith community for the needs of the poor. Mid-November will be the annual appeal for the Campaign for Human Development. These are all good causes. Please do what you can. I tell you about this for your planning. I know money is tight. We are stretching and squeezing every dollar. If you can add even a few dollars for these appeals, it will be a great work of faith and generosity. We have found that the same dollars given are simply divided between the causes resulting in no real gain. Please do whatever you can. Thank you.

Please note the Adult Faith Formation opportunities now scheduled. Weekly bible study will be offered by Faith Ball after the morning Mass. Mary Ann Przybysz will offer a monthly reflection on Covenant, Communion, and Conversion. Mary Ann will also lead the Women's Sweetest Day Breakfast on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Please take advantage of these rich opportunities to grow in faith and build fellowship with our church community. See this bulletin for days, times, and other details.

The story of the Rich Young Man is a familiar one, yet one that carries a timeless and universal message. The story is a critical one for we who live in a very consumerist, possession based culture. As usual, the obvious message is supported by a deeper underlying truth.

It is modestly confusing to have Jesus be addressed as "Good Teacher". It is obvious that Jesus is good, yet he resists the comment. "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." What is the point? The point is the man's desire for eternal life. If the man is to gain eternal life he will do so because of his trust in the goodness of God, and not his own merit or accomplishment. Jesus is shifting the man's awareness away from his own ability to earn eternal life to his dependence on God's desire to give him eternal life.

Eternal life is God's gift pure and simple. We don't earn or merit the promise of heaven because we are good. We gain the gift of heaven because God is good. Eternal life is God's life, which we share right now through faith in Jesus and the grace of baptism. Your life is eternal right now because God desires it and has confirmed it through the dying and rising of Jesus. Once you and I die in the flesh, we will see the eternal life of God in a new way.

Why does the man go away sad? What he seeks is beyond his control. He is not the master of his own fate simply by being good, following rules, and having the security of many possessions. He must surrender himself to something beyond himself. This is very scary because he has built his identity and personal sense of security on his wealth and possessions. Even to this day, people equate good fortune, wealth and security with God's blessing and favor. Such goodness causes us to feel justified and on God's 'good side'. God's favor and blessing is the gift of eternal life that is available to all who seek him regardless of their status in this world.

Jesus saw the goodness of God in this man, and he looked at him with love. This is a just man who is seeking the way and the life of God. Because of his goodness and desire, Jesus calls him to a new level of understanding. It is not about what he can do for God, but only what God desires to do for him. Jesus calls the man to a personal relationship with God, and not a contract of agreement based on merit or good behavior that will gain him what he seeks. We are to seek the Lord with the love and desire of our hearts. If God has blest you with many possessions be grateful and generous. Your identity is in God, not in your goods. Rejoice that God desires to give you heaven as well.

Father John Esper