



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time-Year B-October 14th 2018 -

Bodmin/Padstow

Readings: Wisdom 7:7-11, Psalm 89, Hebrews 4: 12-13, Mark 10: 17-30

Stuff.

We are awash with it.

There is a programme on one of those obscure American reality TV slots called 'Hoarders'. It features endless tragic people marooned in their homes in a veritable ocean of stuff – not just untidy but impassable hallways, unusable bedrooms piled high with junk, living rooms feet deep in years of pointless purchases, kitchens suppurating in unwashed pans, animal droppings and pathogenic foods. These are not poor people – just emotional disasters who have replaced life with inanimate objects and replaced relationships with attachment to things.

When, a decade ago, I came to clear out my parents' house, it was nothing like hoarders but I discovered 600sq.ft of loft rammed to the rafters with unwanted stuff – even unopened Christmas presents. My brother and I were, in turn, refused entry to the local dump as suspected professional clearers and then turned away from our preferred charity shop as we had filled their stockroom. As a consequence I look around periodically at the stuff I have accumulated, even after regular clear-outs, and assess the awful task lying in wait for my eventual survivors.

Our attachment to things, most of us, is extraordinary and, as the richest generation and culture in history, we have a lot of things.

When the rich young man approaches Jesus, he is keen to follow. He is very clued up on the Law of the Lord and he is clearly doing his best – a fact that Jesus acknowledges. The Gospel tells us that Jesus ‘looked at him and loved him’.

But Jesus sees more than we do. He sees the young man’s attachment to the material and He challenges him directly. He challenges him with very carefully chosen words.

‘One thing you lack....’

His lack is in his very wealth and its priorities in his life, the very attachment to things which will detain him from the full service and following of Jesus.

Jesus goes to the heart of the matter. We live in a material world.

Matter is part of creation and useful. But when we give the priority to matter over its and our Creator, we lapse into idolatry and false attachments of the soul.

The disciples, who, after all, have given up everything to follow Jesus, are astonished by Jesus challenge to this good and loveable young man.

What are the implications for us then as the latest bunch of disciples?

First of all we need to understand that the Gospel is not a forensic critique of economic systems. It is a penetrating insight into the human heart. Over the centuries Man has endured various dominant economic systems from Feudalism through Mercantilism to the great hostilities of the last century between Capitalism and Marxian Socialism. The Capitalist system that has enabled the societies employing it to thrive has recently been bedevilled by the rampant greed of globalism right through to naked and shameless theft. The Marxist system

demonstrated that you cannot plan an economy and that the required state totalitarianism leads to poverty, famine and slaughter.

Any system is only as good as the rascals running it and Man is a fallen creature

Jesus here is not speaking of systems but of souls.

Nothing, in the end, belongs to us. We are temporary stewards and, at the final reckoning, we will have to give account. We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can take nothing out. All too often our attachments become our priorities and when Christ and the virtues of Heaven lose their priority and become an afterthought, a mere codicil in our will, then we are no longer following Him.

Getting shot of things and distractions from Him is part of the journey.

Beneficiaries of God we must be benefactors of our fellow Man. It is a good exercise, from time to time, to look around and see the vast riches of even the poorest of us compared with the overwhelming history of Man. Then imagine the freedom of not having to bother about it all. We need to offer it all to God and pray that everything we have and are will be used in His service. When we appear before the judgement we will have no credit but the mercy and generosity we showed to our fellow man and our love and devotion to Jesus