

Two Sides of the Coin (29th Sunday)

(Mark 10: 35-45)

I would like to ask “How many of you took up my invitation from last week To allow Him to Look at you with LOVE and to see what “ONE more thing you must do like the Rich young man” Let go of WHAT ? For the rich young man it was “ Attachment to his possessions ! What is it for you ? What do I need to let go of in order to experience more of life Greater Communion with Him !

I would like to come back to the two sides of the coin once again ! I can never **Over- Emphasize** the importance of trying to see, and view, and understand the importance of of both sides. We tend to emphasize one side a whole lot more than the other, sometimes we are only willing to look at one side, and give no credence to the other. If we are really honest we would say that is a real affliction of our news coverage in the world. The Media shapes the news, they don't really relay, or tell, the news.

Why is that do you think ? Could it be because of our “Conditioning” ? We are so conditioned to being told what to do ! How to do it ! and when to do it that it seems “Normal” for us. In my home, my School, my Church, my work I have been told what to, how to, and when to do it !

When I was growing up I was “Conditioned” by my family in terms of : How to Act How to Behave ! How to Respond.....How to Believe..... How and how to Live Life. There wasn't a great deal of room for variance in that pattern.

I recall an instance when I was in High-School, when some of my friends in class would start a part of the litany of the saints, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Andrew, St. James, St. John, St. Bartholomew, St. Barnabas, On and on St. Louis De Montfort then a bit of a laugh

Somebody would say : Who in the heck is St. Louis De Montfort ? They were making fun of the Rosary that was said every night in my home. When ever my friends arrived at my home during the Rosary they were expected to join in, I did the very same thing in their homes. It was just expectedIt was part of our “Conditioning” Many of them had the very same practice of saying the rosary in their homes. Tony my best friend would often call ahead and say “Get the Rosary going and I’ll be along to pick you up before it is over”

The difference between the rosary in my home and that of my friends was about 10-15 minutes. The Rosary in my home was 23 minutes in my friends homes it varied between *8mins and 12. My mom and dad had met in “the Legion of Mary” and for their whole lifetime maintained the practice of the rosary with all of the Legion trimmings, as well as the Litany of the Saints. It was not too surprising then that my classmates made some fun of the length of the Rosary “Doublers” house (that was a

nick-name I had in those days (another story for another day)

Anyway I decided to suggest to my dad that we could maybe shorten the Rosary a little and be more like some of my other friends ! I shared that it only took 8 and Half mins at Tony's house, and we could kneel on the chairs, rather than on the floor. I thought it was a pretty good idea. Turns out it was not !!!!! Can you guess the answer ?
“ If you like it that much and you want to leave, you can pack up your stuff and leave, don't let the door hit you on the backside”

To say I didn't see that one coming would be an Understatement In essence it was saying something that is often said in our world “There are two choices ‘You can take it or leave it’ ! It could be saying “ there are two sides to the coin, choose one or the other”

Now Thank God, I don't see that as being very helpful. There are two sides to the coin, and they form a unity in the coin which is a value worth exploring. So for this week and the next few weeks with some great gospels coming up I would like to explore that reality.

So we understand the drill, if one side of the coin is then the other side is

Life..... Death

Love..... Apathy

Goodness..... Revenge

Light..... Darkness

Transfer..... Transform

Suffering..... Joy

This is what I would like to speak of today in light of the gospel.

If we don't have a balance of light and darkness, then our tendency to try and see only light will become too intense. If my tendency is to avoid suffering at all costs and to only experience Joy at all time, then my view of life is going to be exceedingly limited. AND, if I have a tendency to Transfer my pain/suffering, to blame someone else, to find who is at fault, then I will probably not experience much Joy.

I will be forever obsessed with A reality, that if it wasn't for them, that person, that group, or even God Himself (from whom I demand an explanation) then I wouldn't be feeling this way.

Richard Rohr, spent the whole past week in his daily reflections on the issue of suffering, and plans to continue the same for the next week. Such great wisdom in those reflections ! Join in the daily reflections !

Richard reflects very intensely on the value and purpose of suffering in the life of the Christian. "Without the Cross there is No Resurrection" We tend to look at suffering and Darkness as something to be avoided at all costs

Sickness Pain Emotional, Physical, Psychological, Social, even Death itself ! We know deep down in our Spirit that these things cannot be avoided..... Death itself is the ultimate Equalizer !

Richard quotes the Irish Social Psychologist Diarmuid O Murchu. (Dermot Murphy)

“ Creation cannot survive, and less so thrive, without its dark side. There is a quality of destruction, decay, and death that is essential to creation’s flourishing..... And the consequence of this destructive dimension is what we call evil, pain, and suffering. Obviously, I am not suggesting fatalistic acquiescence. Indeed, I am arguing for the very opposite: an enduring sense of hope, which it seems to me is not possible without first coming to terms with.... the great paradox. It is ... the unfolding cycle of birth-death- rebirth. And it transpires all over creation, on the macro and micro scales alike.

Yes ! Suffering is and always will be a mystery but it is an integral part of the life of the true Christian. It is what Jesus calls : The carrying of the cross.

Today’s Gospel to me is a very subtle insight into this : Jesus is resolutely traveling toward Jerusalem with his apostles, all the while teaching them the importance of suffering

Two chapters ago, chapter 8 he has been teaching them :

“He then began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed-and after three days rise again” (Mark 8:31)

Meanwhile the Apostles are pretty Clueless !!!

Two of them are asking Can we be seated “One on your Right and the other on your Left” “You do not know what you are asking” Jesus answers ! Can you drink the Cup Can you be Baptized with the Baptism ? Yes we can and so can You and I !

The other disciples become Indignant !!!! Who do they think they are ? Why should they be up there all High and Mighty we have been there as long as them..... in fact some of us have been here longer than them You don't see us asking for special privilege !!!! Maybe We all have different ways of seeking our own wants / needs.

But if you look closely at the whole episode, its really not so bad an idea They wanted some kind of Surety / Certainty from Jesus ! I must confess I have often done just the same “God give me some Assurance that this or that is the right thing the right way IT's going to turn out o'k ! We thrive on Assurances ! Jesus is saying in essence : You have got to Transform your way of thinking, your way of doing, your way of dealing with each other ! The Gospel word is METANOIA !!!! Change of heart and Mind !

Jesus summons them, takes them aside, and say it cannot be that way with you what you're asking for is assurance, what I am offering you is FAITH Trust me ! If I grant you're wishes there is no need for FAITH ! Would you trade FAITH for Knowledge. ??? Maybe in my irrational moments Yes !

He journeys on with the Apostles toward Jerusalem, aware that they still have so much to learn ! We too have much to learn on our Journey !

I pulled out one of my great and favorite poems from my seminary days during the week..... I must say I didn't understand the truth or depth of it back then now I have a much better grasp.....But still a lot to learn about this ! It is one of those many greats by Helen Steiner Rice :

Life is a Mixture of Sunshine and Rain

Life is a mixture indeed Pleasures and Pain

My question for you this week is : Can you, Will you spend time reflecting on this Question :

In my Life Experience at the present time, with all of my Conditioning, Instruction, and Education, am I more likely to :

Transfer Suffering Or Transform It !