Wednesdays in Lent

3/3/2021

Good evening,

Tonight’s reflection is on ***charity*** and the role it plays in our lives as disciples of Jesus. As you enter this time of reflection and conversation, begin by centering yourselves on these verses:

And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified.I coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothing. You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:32-35).

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8** And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, “The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,” and therefore view your needy neighbor with hostility and give nothing; your neighbor might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land” (Deuteronomy 15:7-11).

Then someone came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The young man said to him, “I have kept all these;[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23781b)] what do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23782c)] to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me” (Matthew 19:16-21).

Some questions to consider as you reflect on these passages:

1. What is charity?
2. In what ways can charity include more than just money?
3. What do you think is the relationship between charity and faith?
4. How does charity shape our relationship with each other?
5. How does charity shape our relationship with God?
6. What would it look like to be a congregation grounded in charity?

Blessings as you journey through these 40 days.

Pr. JonPaul