



28th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME
YEAR B – October 15, 2018

The scriptures today speak to us about a kind of wisdom that is more precious than wealth. It is the kind of wisdom that can make the poorest man wealthier than the richest person on earth. It is the wisdom of God and it can discern the reflections and thoughts of the human heart. It provides a vision that is undistorted by selfishness and greed. It is the kind of wisdom that was lacking in the rich young man in today's gospel.

There is a story told about African hunters who have a very clever way of trapping monkeys. They slice a coconut in two, hollow it out, and in one half of the shell cut a hole just big enough for a monkey's hand to pass through. Then they place an orange in the other half before fastening the two parts together. Finally, they secure the coconut to a tree with a rope, retreat into the bush, and wait.

Sooner or later, an unsuspecting monkey swings by, smells the delicious orange, and discovers its location inside the coconut. The monkey then slips its hand through the small hole, grasps the orange, and tries to pull it through the hole. Of course, the orange won't come out. It's too big for that hole.

The monkey won't let go and while it struggles in vain, the hunters throw a net over the monkey and the monkey is captured. The only way the monkey could have saved its life is to let go of the orange. But it doesn't do that.

The rich young man in the gospel today is a little bit like that monkey. Jesus asks him to let go of his wealth and he is not able to do that, so he remains trapped by his greed and desire for wealth.

Clearly, Jesus doesn't ask all of us to let go of everything we own, but he does ask us to let go of something we all have in common. He asks to let go of our sins. If we don't let go, we will be held captive by our sins, whatever they are.

The good news is Jesus doesn't give up on us. He is not an African hunter and we are not monkeys. He continues to love us until we come to our senses like the prodigal son.

In fact, after 54 years in the priesthood, I believe we eventually come to our senses because he loves us. In one sense, we are redeemed despite the cross. We are redeemed by the love of Jesus even from the cross.

With that thought in mind, for a few moments in silence, reflect on what Jesus is asking of you today. Is he asking you to let go of something? Is he asking you to love him as he loves you?

Jesus said:
GO and STOP no more
John 8:11