

**Homily**  
**November 17, 2021**

2 Mac 7:1, 20-31

Psalm 17

Luke 19: 11-28

Four-year-old Sam told me there would soon be a new baby at his house. I asked: Do you want a little sister or a little brother?" He said: "It doesn't matter as long as it is wealthy."

The word "wealthy" is the only connection to this reflection, but I could not resist the story.

We have today three examples of persons of wealth as well as royalty and nobility.

We can consider King Antiochus in the Book of Maccabee's who will not be insulted or ridiculed. He will use bribery and oaths to give away some of his riches and power to a young boy in exchange for aligning himself with the King's religion and forsaking his own.

"You will be rich. You will be happy. You will be my Friend and have a high office in my kingdom."

A clearly misguided notion of happiness depending on wealth!

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We can consider Jesus' parable on the road in the face of his disciples who thought that the Kingdom would await them in glory in Jerusalem.

Did the parable change their misguided notion of the Reign of God?

It certainly has some tension arousing material around the main character of nobility and wealth.

This wealthy nobleman was seeking even more power. He enlisted his servants to amass more money for his fortune. He was ruthless and murderous toward those who opposed him- like King Antiochus.

Those he entrusted with money were expected to do business with it to gain more for their master. And do it in the manner of their master, that is, wheel and deal without regard for who is cheated.

We have here in his nobleman one of those immoral figures who appear often enough in Jesus' parables and can confound us to see how this is about the Reign of God. This is not the Loving Father, the Generous Bread Baker or the Shepherd who carries the wandering sheep on his shoulders.

This man has trained his servants to wheel and deal. They are reflections of their Master. The third servant is not. He is fearful, timid and takes no risks. He has nothing to show. In that choice, he has lost everything. He is out on his ear.

What is this Parable about? If Jesus' parables are about the coming Kingdom, the Reign of God... then ...? is this an odd way to understand it?

This parable, neither religious nor moral sets us into the harsh and predatory world: Anyone who doesn't go for broke will be fired.

The claim is this: God's plan for the world is to create a new thing in the midst of an old society, not unlike our own. This new world of God will not succeed by cowardice, with people who are immovable, who constantly want to make themselves secure, who would rather delay than act. This new society of God's will only succeed with people who are ready to risk, who will wager everything on the turn of a card, who go all out and who, with utter determination, will be doers.

In other places, Jesus says that the Reign of God comes by pure grace at times-as if by itself. But he can also say that it's coming demands utter commitment. It is both/and.

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I close with a third consideration of wealth and royalty. That of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

She was called the Franciscan Queen. Two descriptive words that don't seem to go together, do they?

Along with her noble birth and royal status as well as her great wealth, she had an intuitive spiritual poverty.

Elizabeth rejoiced that her station in life gave her a greater scope for her charitable activities. She established several hospitals for the poor, nursed the sick herself and with her own hands cared for those with the dreaded disease of leprosy.

When famine struck her own kingdom, she opened the royal granaries' to the poor. Many lives were spared.

Elizabeth was not spared personal tragedies. When her beloved husband died of plague and her in-laws, offended by her ways, banished her from the royal palace, she was not daunted in her charity.

She continued her work in caring for the poor and destitute and now was one of them. She was a Franciscan Queen, who unlike the characters in the parable was neither dishonest nor a coward.

Now, ourselves.

Every day we pray "Thy Kingdom Come"

We might wonder when all is said and done, "? what will it be like?"

Let us focus on its coming even today in the ways that we are faithful to our heritage: not with illustrious titles of nobility and instead with the insecurity of our financial state.

Yet, still holding to our devotion and commitment to the poor of our world.

We can count on sheer grace along with “deep faith, courageous spirit and action for justice.”



Sam told me the other day the new baby was home, and her name is Grace.  
I asked him. How is she?  
He said: Wealthy.