

HOMILY 28TH SUN OT YRB 2018

I want to share this morning a conversion experience written by one of our parishioners, M George McConnell. “I have always had strong faith and throughout the years of my life it has been tested but there was always a deep sense that God was always with me. If anyone would get into a conversation about faith I was usually gifted to say the right thing about trusting in GOD having faith, sharing my beliefs. This carried me through most of my whole life. Then one day I was listening to a Christian radio station on the way home from work (only was to keep your sanity) a song came on with the lyrics if you have faith to move a mountain but do not have love you have nothing. If you can speak eloquently but do not have love you are like a clashing cymbal. I then realized that LOVE was a missing factor in my faith journey. Love is the most important thing a Christian is called to do. When the scribes were trying to trap Jesus they asked him what was the greatest commandment? He replied to love GOD and love your neighbor. God sent me a simple message that day love is what he has for all of us that is what he wants us to share with everyone.”

In the Gospel reading a man ran up to Jesus and asked him: “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He has observed all of the commandments from his youth. He is a good man. But he was looking for something more. Jesus looked at him and loved him and told him to sell what he has, give to the poor and follow Jesus. I think Jesus is telling him that strict adherence to the letter of the law is not enough. That his possessions were preventing him from following Jesus. I think the man was trapped by his possessions and they were holding him back. The disciples did not understand Jesus response. In the Old Testament wealth and material goods were considered a sign of God’s favor. Jesus was changing all of that. We know now that money does not solve all of your problems. That sometimes the drive form wealth can damage our families and our relationships. In fact, studies have shown that after a person accumulates a certain level of wealth, further accumulation has an inverse effect on their

happiness and general well being, In other words sometimes the more you have the less happiness it brings.

In the Gospel reading Jesus saw that the man's possessions were preventing him from following Jesus. We should all ask Jesus the same question today. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Now we cannot walk up to Jesus physically and ask him and get a direct answer to our question like the man in the Gospel, but Jesus does communicate with us. We always need to be looking for something more. We are never spiritually done. In George's conversion story he tells us that he has always had strong faith, but he was open to something more. He got his answer in a song on the radio. He realized love was missing from his faith journey. God communicates with us in many ways. Sometimes it is through Scripture, sometimes it is through other people, sometimes through a sort of intuition; you just know this is what Jesus is telling you. Sometimes through a song on the radio.

The first reading today talks about wisdom. Wisdom is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom is taking our knowledge of God and the world, and the knowledge of how the world works in our experience and having insight into practical applications of that knowledge. This insight comes not from the person, but comes from the Holy Spirit. This is another way that God communicates with us. Wisdom is evidence of God's personal involvement in the created world. George told us earlier that if anyone would get into a conversation about faith, he usually the right thing to say. This is a gift from the Holy Spirit and George was open to receiving the gift. He knew he did not have to figure it out on his own. If you really connect with people, really listen to them you do not have to be worried about what you are going to say. The Holy Spirit will help you, but you have to be open.

I invite each of you to ask God today, what is preventing you from following him. And be open to the many ways God can respond. Grow in wisdom. You do not have to figure it all out yourself. God will help you.