

Homily for the 28th Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009

Mark: Every time I have read or heard this gospel I took away the main message the evangelist proclaims: The only good use of money is to give it away to provide for the necessities of the poor and to proclaim the good news of following Jesus. This gospel proclaims most starkly what is throughout the gospels the main message of Jesus about money.

But this time (after all these years of study!) a new note struck me: The young man *went away sad*. He had been invited into the greatest adventure of all time ---close companionship with Jesus, and the opportunity to proclaim the good news of salvation present in Jesus Messiah. And he knew his loss, as he regretfully turned down the opportunity. What a joy it is to know Jesus and to proclaim to others the joy that he brings! Brothers and sisters, Jesus gives us that same opportunity each day and especially this Sunday.

How many of you have family members---children, grandchildren, siblings, spouses, parents---who have left the Catholic Church? Please raise your hands!

You may have asked, even nagged, these people you love to come back to the Church. But it's hard to minister to your own---just ask any priest! Relationships are complicated and that history can get in the way of sharing faith. We cannot get them to darken the church's door directly. But now our church is going to do that asking for you.

How many of those loved ones of yours who have left the church watch TV? Raise your hands if they do! I thought so. We are going after them where they live.

Catholics Come Home is a series of professionally done TV ads for Catholicism. (You have seen other churches advertise on TV, right? Why not us?) Take a look at this:

Show the ad **THE EPIC** in church (1 minute).

This is not a hard sell---we are not badgering anyone---but it is a powerful invitation to family and friends to find what is missing in their lives.

CCH ads will run on all the TV stations in Western Washington during this Lent, from Ash Wednesday through Easter. This campaign will have an impact. The

diocese of Phoenix ran these ads two years ago and 90,000 came to inquiry and healing sessions. Of those, 30,000 were registered and practicing Catholics some six months later. We hope for at least those numbers in our own Archdiocese. I hope for 55 new members of our own parish.

But the campaign will cost \$450,000, almost all of it to buy prime media time. Our parish is committed to raising \$2400 as our share of this enterprise. And that's where you come in. Does supporting this interest you?

This is not an obligatory request like the Stewardship Campaign or the Annual Catholic Appeal. But some of you may want to be, like last Sunday's readings, a prophet like Moses or Eldad. Or you may want to respond to Jesus' invitation today to the Rich Young Man to spread the good news of the Reign of God.

I firmly believe that these ads will get people talking. I know ex-Catholics, including members of your family, will come home. Non-Catholics, too, will express an interest. But first we must get the ads out.

There is also a second step of evangelizing these loved ones to which I am now inviting you. Our parish must be prepared to receive inquiries, answer questions, provide programs in which those who have been away can find renewed faith, hope, and love in their Catholic home. We are now in the process of organizing a Welcoming Committee to greet and receive these loving members of our family. I myself will be having meetings with all who inquire. But I need your help in many ways. Please let us know if you want to be personally part of this Welcome Home process for our parish.

Finally, if any of you want to know more about this project, so you can steer people home, consult the website: (catholicscomehome.org). There you and these seekers will find answers to almost any question they might ask. And you can see two other ads there as well.

So here's your chance to proclaim the good news of God giving himself to us. You can pick up the envelope for CCH in the pews and put something in today's 2nd collection to buy media time for Christ. Or you can sign on to help us welcome home Catholics who have either lost their way or felt themselves driven away. Or you can get on the website and get others to do the same. Pray that God show you how you can reach out and welcome home those who want to come home...to the good news.