

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

September 22, 2019



Is it Better to be Rich or Poor?

As children in elementary school, we used to talk about how much money cars and trucks cost and whose family owned the biggest house or the fastest snowmobile or who went on the most elaborate vacation. In our limited comprehension of the world, we knew from the time of our youth that having money or not having it formed a certain understanding of people in the world. The basic principle that was taught to us in these childhood conversations was that the person with the most expensive car or truck, the biggest house, the fastest snowmobile and ability to take extravagant vacations was to be looked at as the best. Now that I am thirty years removed from those conversations, I can look back and see that the majority of us who were involved in those discussions were children from average families where money was not found in abundance, yet no one went without the basic necessities. A town such as my hometown of Ivanhoe, MN with a population of 701 had very little to boast about and not too many of us went on to live extravagant lives of the rich and famous. However, we were still formed to make value judgments about people based on money. If one has wealth they are to be revered and if one is poor they are to be disregarded. Jesus in this week's Gospel speaks into this notion of rich and poor present even in His day. He says, "No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon (Luke 16:12-13)." Understanding wealth and material goods from an earthly perspective is limited; Jesus challenges His believers to embrace the threefold truths to 1. Use wisely the wealth you have here on earth in order to secure your place at the end of time; 2. Make prudent and restrained use of earthly goods; 3. Understand that the Lord expects total dedication from His followers. This Gospel challenges the notion that money in itself is evil, but rather it is our disposition toward the use of money that can lead to good or evil. If a person has their money and resources determining their hearts desires they are enslaved to money. If a person opens their heart to God and is led to helping people with their money and resources they can be free around their wealth. Ultimately, we are to give God the glory for the gifts we have in our lives. The gifts we have should not control us, but with responsible freedom we should seek opportunities to glorify God by assisting with the needs of those around us.

Vocations to Priesthood

As the new school year has started, it is a good reminder to pray for the men who are studying for the priesthood here in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Vocation to priesthood is a special calling where Jesus speaks to the heart of a man to follow Him on this special journey of prayer and service. Seminary students live in a special community where they can receive spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral formation. I received this call to follow Christ as a priest most clearly when I was a student at Minnesota State University, Mankato. As a college student I began to go to daily Mass and spend quiet time in prayer each day. Through this increase of time with the Lord, I was able to hear the voice of Jesus inviting me to follow Him. Most men studying for the priesthood in our area are enrolled in St. Paul Seminary, Pontifical North American College, Immaculate Heart of Mary College Seminary or St. John Vianney College Seminary. Currently we have five men who are in their final year of theological studies for priesthood: Deacons Austin Barnes, Paul Hedman, Clayton Forner, Timothy Tran and Nathan Hastings. There are twenty-six men in theology III and pre-theology studies; they have 2 to 6 years before priestly ordination. There are also twenty-two men in college seminary studies, who God willing would have 5 to 8 years before priestly ordination. Please join me in praying for these men and for others to respond generously to Christ's call to follow Him.

Most Holy Redeemer Fall Festival

I am so excited for the community to gather for our Fall Festival at Most Holy Redeemer in Montgomery, MN. Come on out and join in this special time on Sunday September 22, 2019. Thank you to all of our leadership and volunteers who have worked so hard to put on all aspects of the festival. It is a joy to gather as a community for prayer, games, music, raffles, crafts, auction, food and fellowship! I hope to see you there.

God bless you!

Fr. Tom Niehaus