

Scripture*Amos 8:4-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13*

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church is the following lesson: "Every practice that reduces persons to nothing more than a means of profit enslaves them, leads to idolizing money and contributes to the spread of atheism" (CCC 2424). It's sad that the caution flag Jesus has waived so often throughout this 'Journey Narrative' is still pertinent today. It simply means that the lessons taught by our Redeemer still have not been fully acted upon some two-thousand years later. Jesus' native language was Aramaic. The word "mammon" is an Aramaic word which means "something confided" or "deposited". In this Gospel mammon is clearly the mammon of iniquity. In the parable there is a steward who manages the estate of a rich man; but is accused, with good reason, of mismanagement and thus is removed from his position. The steward doesn't know where to turn because he is not strong enough for manual labor and he is too ashamed to beg. Unfortunately, he's not too ashamed to steal. He calls upon his master's debtors and falsifies their contracts. In doing so, he has cheated his master even further. The master then commends this corrupt steward for his prudence. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light." This can be a difficult statement to understand. The master and the steward represent those who live by the ideals of this world. Therefore, the master commends the steward for such a worldly - looking out for number one - type of solution. The children of light live by the ideals of the world to come. Although our Lord is not actually recommending the behavioral tendencies of the children of this world who ingeniously invent schemes for their temporal advantage, He would seem to be suggesting that the children of light need to consider themselves stewards for God by being prudent about the concerns of eternity. In other words, stewards of God need to conduct their affairs fully aware that they will have to render an account to their Master because as stewards of God much has been given therefore much will be required. "You cannot serve God and mammon." Jesus concludes this Gospel with that statement to show that serving Him faithfully and properly is not possible if attached to worldly possessions. There's no harm in having temporal riches, but if there is anything among those temporal goods that absolutely, positively cannot be parted with, that possession, then, is an attachment and is incompatible with serving Christ because the attachment becomes an idol.



From the Catechism...

Faith is a human act

154 Believing is possible only by grace and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit. But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act. Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths he has revealed are contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason. Even in human relations it is not contrary to our dignity to believe what other persons tell us about themselves and their intentions or to trust their promises (for example, when a man and a woman marry) to share a communion of life with one another. If this is so, still less is it contrary to our dignity to "yield by faith the full submission of . . . intellect and will to God who reveals," and to share in an interior communion with him.

155 In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace: "Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace."

Faith and understanding

157 Faith is *certain*. It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on the very word of God who cannot lie. To be sure, revealed truths can seem obscure to human reason and experience, but "the certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of natural reason gives." "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt."

158 "Faith *seeks understanding*": it is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith and to understand better what He has revealed; a more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love. The grace of faith opens "the eyes of your hearts to a lively understanding of the contents of Revelation: that is, of the totality of God's plan and the mysteries of faith, of their connection with each other and with Christ, the center of the revealed mystery. "The same Holy Spirit constantly perfects faith by his gifts, so that Revelation may be more and more profoundly understood." In the words of St. Augustine, "I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe."

159 *Faith and science*: "Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth." "Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God. The humble and persevering investigator of the secrets of nature is being led, as it were, by the hand of God in spite of himself, for it is God, the conserver of all things, who made them what they are."



Faith—the beginning of eternal life

163 Faith makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision, the goal of our journey here below. Then we shall see God "face to face," "as he is." So faith is already the beginning of eternal life.

164 Now, however, "we walk by faith, not by sight"; we perceive God as "in a mirror, dimly" and only "in part." Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice, and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it.

166 Faith is a personal act—the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbor impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Saints Speak

The theological virtues of faith, hope and love (charity) are supernatural gifts that lead the soul to God. Faith consists in adherence, through grace, to a truth revealed by God because of the authority of God rather than because of the evidence given. The virtue of hope has the possession of God and eternal happiness as its object. Its grounds are God's goodness, his power, his faithfulness to his promises, and, most specifically, the resurrection of Christ. Without hope, faith is weakened or disappears.

Word Wise

Supernatural

That which is above or beyond the natural. In the Christian sense, God's action is supernatural, miracles are supernatural, evil spirits are supernatural. The supernatural is not above nature simply because we cannot explain it, but because it acts outside the normal boundary of our natural existence. In Christianity, God uses the natural as channels of the supernatural. For example, washing with water removes dirt but washing with the water of baptism brings forgiveness of sin.



Virtue

Not a word that often gets much play in contemporary society. In general a virtue is a commendable quality or trait or the capacity to act for the good. The theological virtues are faith hope and love/charity. In order to receive and excel in these virtues, God must give the person the gift, the desire for them. They draw the soul toward a deeper experience of God. The cardinal of chief natural virtues are: prudence, justice, temperance, or fortitude.

Revelation

This means that which is shown forth or made known. Scripture or the Bible is referred to as divine revelation because we believe that the Holy Spirit inspired and preserved the texts that have come down to us and for our sacred scriptures. It is also revelation in that it helps to make known or shows forth the divine and how God relates to the human and the human back to God.

Beatific Vision

Refers to the vision of those who have died and are with God in eternity or heaven. It is the fullness of the experience of being in God's presence, of looking upon the Divine Self, of seeing God "face to face".

Yahweh

The word that comes to be ascribed as the sacred name in Judaism. It comes from the experience of Moses being told by God to have the people of Israel in slavery in Egypt set free. Moses asks: "Who should I tell them that you are who sends me to them? God responds that Moses is to tell them I AM. This is also rendered I AM WHO AM. Which in the Hebrew letters looks like YHWH. This declaration becomes a name of sorts and the Jews never spoke it but referred to God as the Holy One, etc. The ability to speak a name or name a person indicated a powerful relationship, even a hold on that person. No one is worthy to have a hold on the divine so the name of God has always been revered and protected in the Jewish tradition. Jesus, who is the face of God in human history, invites us to a new intimacy with the Father through him and so we are able to name our God and call upon the Divine in a free manner. The name Yeshua or Joshua means God or Yahweh saves and is the same as Jesus that is a derivative of Yeshua.

Use this space for any questions or thoughts from reflecting on the material in these Companion Notes that you would like to share when the group meets again.

Remember to read the scripture readings for next week, the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time and do the journal keeping on p. 160 of the Catechumen's Companion.