

October 12, 2003  
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

By Father Charles Bowes

Wisdom 7:7-11  
Hebrews 4:12-13  
Mark 10:17-30

## *Someday we, too, will rely totally upon God.*

He came jogging. He came jogging for his life (as joggers do) that early morning in Palestine centuries ago.

It does not say where he came from. It does not say where he went to. He ran like joggers do.

He stopped for a moment. He fell on his knees before this preacher, this Jesus, and asked: "Sir, what should I do to share eternal life? What should I do to find it all? What should I do to love completely?"

Jesus looked at him and gave him the common answer, the normal way out, the road most traveled - that for any Jew raised on the Torah, only one thing is necessary...everything should be a means of centering on God. He said, "Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not testify falsely, do not deceive, honor your father and your mother."

But before Jesus even finished, the young man replied, "I did all that. I did it from my youth. But I know that it is not sufficient, that is not all!" And here the young man reveals not only the sincerity, but also the underlying assumption of his original request - he wants not just a share, but an inheritance in everlasting life. "I don't want assurance, but insurance," he says. "I want to do something to guarantee my reward."

Again Jesus looked at him and said, "If you really want to share in eternal life, if you really want

to share in it all, if you really decide to love completely, if you really feel the urge of the Kingdom of God - loosen yourself from all you have, sell it, give it away. And once free, totally free, come to me and be as I am. You lack but one thing. Despite your wealth of piety, you lack the one thing necessary: true reliance on God. Could you? Would you give up all insurance schemes, no longer placing your confidence in your own resources and relying totally on God's will for you?"

The man looked up. No, it was I who looked up. No, it was you who looked up. His face fell. My face fell. Your face fell. And he, and I, and you went away sad, knowing that what Jesus asked was something we could not do yet. We were not ready to come, not ready to grow, not ready to enter, not ready to rely totally upon God, not ready to give up all insurance schemes. And we ran on, you and I. We are jogging still, constantly having with us that same question, that same desire, that same urge to chuck it all...but not quite able to do so.

May we never forget what that young man never forgot, or those who were witnesses to the scene, or the one who informed Saint Mark about it. That witness noted carefully that Jesus remained looking after him with love and with a smile.

Just as Jesus is looking after you and me, saying to his amazed disciples: "For a human being it is

impossible, but not for God. With God all things are possible.”

I trust it is that love, that promise you and I will find when our running is over, when our jogging for greater wealth is done, when our insurance schemes are spent. And deep down, you trust that hope too, or else you wouldn't be here. So we give praise and thanks to God for the blessed assurance that one day, some day, we shall indeed become the holy food we receive here. For it is easier for this bread and wine to be convinced that it is the Body and Blood of Christ than it is for us to be so convinced.

Someday we, too, will rely  
totally upon God.