

# Pastor's letter

October 11, 2009

Dear parishioner,

What must I do to have eternal life, to have joy forever and be happy?

I believe that this is a question that everyone of us would ask Jesus one day if we have the fortune of meeting Him along our way.

The conversation between Jesus and the rich young man is very interesting. It has to do with the importance of being free from everything versus the desire to possess things. This event offers me the opportunity to reflect on one aspect of our human nature, which is, affectivity, that is to say, the inability to find a clear and definitive way to what seems an obvious answer.

The rich young man is a good boy; He follows all the commandments, loves the Lord, but has difficulty making a most difficult and radical decision in his life, which is to leave behind all of his worldly possessions.

As hard as I try, I don't find anything in the boy that is wrong, sinful or condemning. For the reason that I stated above: from that sense of ownership that comes forth from our human nature. Then too I am reminded of that question that Jesus put forth to those people that wanted to stone a prostitute: "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." (John 8,7)

But the great question remains without answer. "What must I do to have eternal life, to have joy forever and to be happy?"

I would like to pose you and myself the question. "What does the whole world think about wealth?" Without falling into morality and with open eyes and mind in front of reality, we can say with extreme certainty, that wealth or economy commands every choice we make and it directs our life. Economy manages our power and our choices, even in our small families. The salary that we bring home every month determines our style of life. It is necessary to work, to produce, to earn and to purchase things, which are often useless. This mentality of a strong national economy, and a sure family wealth has entered warily inside of us, inside the educational system, to our children. You try to talk to the young people that go to high school; you notice quickly their first desire at the end of the school is to have a good job, then all other things, even if they are more important. This is what normally characterizes the mind of young people.

Why does all this happen? It is difficult to define, but one thing is certain, we are called to live our life, here and now. To maintain us, we must work, we must think about having a solid and stable occupation that allows us to

live without fearing about ending in the middle of nowhere.

I have never known anybody that has said to me, “I live for money and to make money!” No! I have never known such an avid, greedy person. But I have known people searching for possessions. I have met happy people when they have received an increase in their salary.

The need for possession, does it stem from our human nature? To establish safe economic is one of the first goal in every type of society, rich or poor.

Therefore, after all, it comes natural to ask, “But what does Jesus think about the wealth, what is His position?” Jesus doesn’t previously condemn the wealthy, neither does he exalt poverty. During His life, Jesus frequented rich and poor people. He was free. But to us, His disciples, He says to be careful, because wealth is dangerous, for it promises what in no way it can give you: a happy liberty!

Returning to the question that the rich man posed to Jesus: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10. 17)

In Jesus’ answer there is no sentence against the wealth of the young man but an invitation to him to be free from his wealth.

Jesus tells the rich man, if you want to have eternal life, if you want to know happiness, if you want to follow me, be free! Let your life be expressed without having earthly bonds, don’t make your decisions depend on your wealth.

This young man would be anyone of us that asks Jesus: “Please, show me the road to happiness. Show me the road to respect your commandments with my job, with the money that it gives me to live. Show me the road that You cross and I will try to follow you, but forgive me if I sometimes fall and rise again, trying not to lose you from sight.”

Peace, Father Luciano