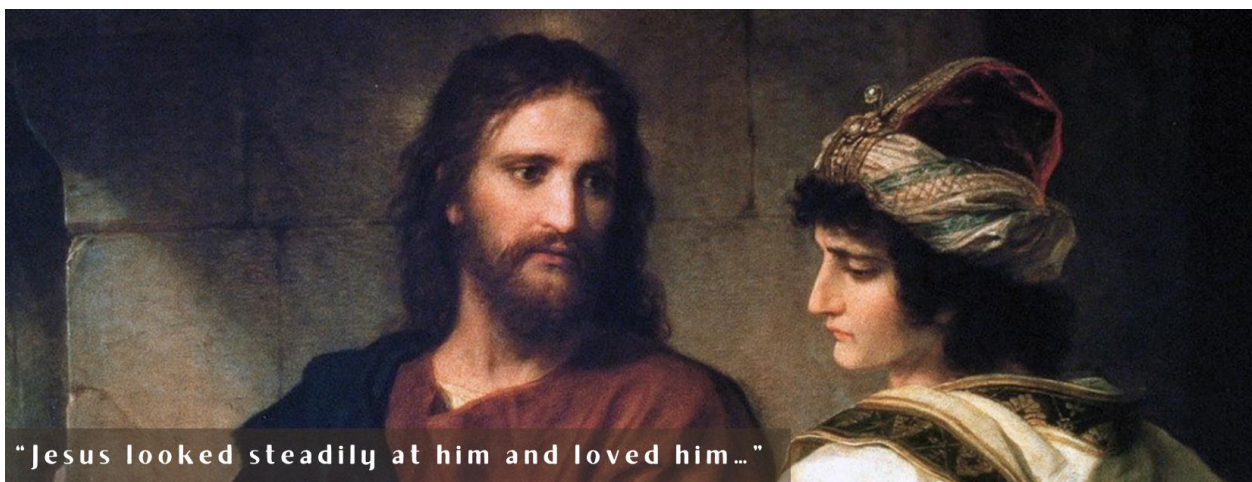


JESUS LOOKED STEADILY AT HIM AND LOVED HIM
TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – 10 OCTOBER 2021



Christ and the Rich Young Ruler by Heinrich Hofmann

This gospel is a powerful and fundamental challenge to reflect on our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The protagonist is a wealthy man who asks Jesus what more he must do to inherit eternal life? We have to remind ourselves that eternal life begins in our earthly life and continues on into eternal life.

The rich man believes he has been called by God to something more. He has kept all the commandments, he is a good man yet a restlessness in him provokes him to throw himself at the feet of Jesus ask what must he do to inherit eternal life?

Does he feel called to something deeper which he does not understand but for some reason he asks this personal question of Jesus? There are many stories in the history of the Church of people like the rich man. St Francis of Assisi whose feast day is October 4th is a good example. Whereas St Francis heard God's call and responded, the rich man could not accept Jesus' invitation to give his wealth to the poor and throw in his lot with Jesus. The gospel tells us that Jesus looks at him steadily and loves him and makes the invitation 'follow me'.

Just as quickly the rich man rejects the invitation. He is wealthy, his wealth has first call on his decision making. He goes away immediately, sad that the invitation was too much inappropriate because he was rich. Who gives money away?

Underneath this drama we pick up a sub-plot. Jesus is calling on the disciples to give their lives away into his safe keeping. They have to trust him that they will receive their reward. Their challenge is on a par with that put to the rich man. He walked away. Jesus explains how one enters the kingdom of heaven and they are astounded.

Like the disciples, we are astounded by this turn of events. Money is a good resource providing protection for the present and the future. There is so much we can do with riches to make a better world. Jesus tells them that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom!

They were expecting to do well by following Jesus and he dashes their dreams except he says that all things are possible for God. But we have to let go and place our trust in him.

In the 17th century Izaak Walton, a well know author wrote that the three great apostles of practical atheism were health, wealth, and power. These three, made converts without effort, if we had them we had no need of God.

Helder Camara an outstanding Archbishop of Recife in Brazil, a very poor diocese also said, *'I know how hard it is to be rich and still keep the milk of human kindness'*.

It is hard not to be self-sufficient!

Be childlike, let go, fall into the arms of God.

Father Gary Walker SSC

[St Columbans Mission Society](#)

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/101021.cfm>