

“There’s Nothing You Can Do!”

A man named Murray put the following announcement in his local newspaper: "LOST: a black leather wallet containing precious family photos, personal ID documents, and \$875. Finder can keep the photos and documents but please return the money, to which I am attached for sentimental reasons."

One man replaced all the windows in his house with expensive double-pane energy efficient windows. A year later he got a call from the contractor complaining that his work had been completed for an entire year and he had yet to pay for them. So, the man proceeded to tell the contractor just what his fast-talking sales guy had told him last year, that in one year the windows would pay for themselves. Why should he pay if the windows paid for themselves?

A third-grade teacher asked her class to solve a math problem: "Suppose you had \$.99 and your friend had \$99. What would be the difference?" And one little girl replied, "The decimal point."

Why am I opening today’s sermon with stories about Money? Because today’s gospel talks about a man and his wealth. It is always interesting to discover people’s outlook when it comes to their money and wealth and what they will do to obtain it or keep it. I heard about an expert in diamonds who happened to be seated on an airplane beside a woman with a huge diamond on her finger. Finally, the man introduced himself and said, "I couldn't help but notice your beautiful diamond. I am an expert in precious stones. Please tell me about that stone." She replied, "That is the famous Klopman diamond, one of the largest in the world. But there is a strange curse that comes with it." Now the man was really interested. He asked, "What is the curse?" As he waited with bated breath, she replied, "It's Mr. Klopman."

Some of us will sacrifice quite a bit to obtain wealth. Some of us will even be willing to sacrifice our Eternal Salvation. That was what the rich young ruler discovered in today’s Gospel lesson. The gospel lesson for this morning is from the Gospel of Mark, the story of the rich, young ruler who came to Jesus, asking, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" In Mark he is simply referred to as a "man" who comes to Jesus. In Matthew he is called a "good man." In Luke he is called a "ruler." So the composite picture of him, which is probably accurate, is that he is rich, young, and a ruler, that is to say a land owner. To put it in our terms, a young man comes to Jesus, extremely successful, extraordinarily rich, and therefore right with God.