

*“Good teacher,
what must I do
to inherit eternal life?”*

Luke 18:18

LENTEN REFLECTION SERIES 2010

Featuring

Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J. Bishop of Tyler

Produced by the

Commission for the Call to Holiness and Discipleship
in the Diocese of Tyler

“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Lk 18:18

LENTEN REFLECTION 2010
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

GATHERING PRAYER [Clergy or, if no clergy is present, the group facilitator leads the participants into this Lenten observance with this prayer]:

Prayer for Abundant Life

Lord Jesus, Mercy of the Father, hear my prayer.
Guide my penance. Be with me in fasting.
Take and receive the alms I give your Church.

Father, be pleased with these things I do,
for the deeds of my earthly life are my worship of you,
the activity of my eternal life that is now.

Most Holy Spirit, grant that I may have life
and have it more abundantly.

Mary, Mother Most Holy,
fill us with love for your son, Jesus. Amen.

GETTING FOCUSED: [At the beginning of each session, the facilitator reads slowly the following passage from the Gospel of Luke. Participants are allowed a few minutes to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart. They then answer privately the questions that follow. Participants are free to share relevant insights and the facilitator leads the discussion.]

(all stand)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

18:18-23

¹⁸ An official asked him this question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ^A ¹⁹ Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." ^B ²⁰ You know the commandments, ^C "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother." ^D ²¹ And he replied, "All of these I have observed from my youth." ^E ²² When Jesus heard this he said to him, "There is still one thing left for you ^F: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ^G ²³ But, when he heard this, he became quite sad, for he was very rich. ^H

The Gospel of the Lord

REFLECTION:

^A “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Earlier in the Gospel of Luke Jesus was asked this very same question by an expert in Mosaic law – a scholar and lawyer – likely one of the Scribes¹: (Lk 10:25) ^CAnd, Jesus responded in much the same way. But, instead of saying “You know the commandments,” (18:20) Jesus answered the inquisitor’s question with a question: “What is written in the law?” (10:26) [If time allows, see Lk 10:25-28],

Now, imagine that Jesus says to you: “You know the commandments. What is written in the law?” How would you answer?

What are the Ten Commandments? (Deuteronomy 5:6-21)

What is the Greatest Commandment? (CCC 2055)

What are the five Precepts of the Church? (CCC 2041-2043)

Which laws best reflect our worship as a Eucharistic people? (no hint, think it through)

Do we faithfully observe these laws because they are imposed on us or do the laws help us to understand who we are in relation to God – free sons and daughters of God? Explain. (no hint, think it through)

[One (or different participants) reads each of the following OT, NT and Gospel texts slowly for all to hear and between each reading, allows a moment of quiet to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart.]

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Deuteronomy 26:4-10

NEW TESTAMENT READING: the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans 10:8-13

GOSPEL: According to Luke 4:1-13 (all stand)

BISHOP’S LENTEN REFLECTION [The facilitator broadcasts the audio-video presentation by Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J., Bishop of Tyler, speaking on the topic of: The First Precept of the Church.]

¹ CSB fn p.1374

FIRST PRECEPT

"You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor."

The first precept ("You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor") requires the faithful to sanctify the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord as well as the principal liturgical feasts honoring the mysteries of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints; in the first place, by participating in the Eucharistic celebration, in which the Christian community is gathered, and by resting from those works and activities which could impede such a sanctification of these days. CCC 2042

In light of Bishop Corrada's reflection on the first precept of the Church, discuss the following:

What does Bishop Corrada mean?: "We live for Easter. We live for the Liturgy."
(CCC 1067-1069)

Why does Bishop Corrada say it is important for us to attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation? (CCC 2047, 2176, 2181-2182)

CONCLUSION: As we go our separate ways and until we come back together again, let each of us continue to ask: "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

CLOSING PRAYER –

Father, speak your Word to my heart.
Holy Spirit, help me to listen intently.
Answer me Good Teacher,
What must I do to inherit eternal life?
Tell me and I will do it
with the help of your grace that comes to me
through the intercessions of our Blessed Mother,
Mary Most Holy. Amen.

“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Lk 18:18

LENTEN REFLECTION 2010
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

GATHERING PRAYER [Clergy or, if no clergy is present, the group facilitator leads the participants into this Lenten observance with this prayer]:

Prayer for Abundant Life

Lord Jesus, Mercy of the Father, hear my prayer.
Guide my penance. Be with me in fasting.
Take and receive the alms I give your Church.

Father, be pleased with these things I do,
for the deeds of my earthly life are my worship of you,
the activity of my eternal life that is now.

Most Holy Spirit, grant that I may have life
and have it more abundantly.

Mary, Mother Most Holy,
fill us with love for your son, Jesus. Amen.

GETTING FOCUSED: [At the beginning of each session, the facilitator reads slowly the following passage from the Gospel of Luke. Participants are allowed a few minutes to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart. They then answer privately the questions that follow. Participants are free to share relevant insights.]

(all stand)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

18:18-23

¹⁸ An official asked him this question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ^A ¹⁹ Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." ^B ²⁰ You know the commandments, ^C "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother." ^D ²¹ And he replied, "All of these I have observed from my youth." ^E ²² When Jesus heard this he said to him, "There is still one thing left for you ^F: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ^G ²³ But, when he heard this, he became quite sad, for he was very rich. ^H

The Gospel of the Lord

REFLECTION:

^B “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.” Here, Jesus is not self-deprecating. He is not diminishing his own goodness relative to the goodness of his Father. Jesus is responding to an apparent affront that is the official’s very peculiar manner of addressing a rabbi. “Good Teacher” seems to be false or disingenuous flattery that might betray the official’s attitude if heard as sarcasm.²

How do we rightly approach Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (CCC 1451)

What is the effect of our examination of conscience? (CCC 1435)

For a thorough examination of conscience, is it necessary to consider one’s faithfulness to the precepts of the church? Why or why not? (CCC 2041)

REFLECTION:

^D “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother.” Notice that Jesus omits those commandments that pertain to our relationship with God and mentions only those commandments that pertain to our relationship with one another (and not even all of those).

Which commandments in relation to God did Jesus omit? Why do you suppose he did not mention them? (CCC 1432)

Which of the commandments in relation to others did Jesus omit? Why do you suppose he did not mention them? (CCC 2519)

Since Jesus did not actually articulate certain commandments, may we consider them optional? (no hint, think it through)

Since Jesus did not actually articulate the Precepts of the Church, may we consider them as optional? (no hint, think it through)

Earlier in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said to his apostles, “Whoever listens to you listens to me.” (Lk 10:16) How might this saying be applied to the Precepts of the Church? (CCC 87)

² Ibid.

REFLELCTION

^E“All of these I have observed from my youth.” Jesus, recognizes in him an earnestness to observe the law.³ In his mercy, Jesus views this as an opening to invite the official into a deeper, more intimate relationship – to imitate Jesus and to follow as his disciple – the way of moral life.⁴

In the silence of your heart, ask yourself: Is Jesus inviting me into a deeper more intimate encounter with him? When was the last time I went to confession? What might be keeping me from experiencing his loving embrace of forgiveness?

[One (or different participants) reads each of the following OT, NT and Gospel texts slowly for all to hear and between each reading, allows a moment of quiet to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart.]

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

NEW TESTAMENT READING: Philippians 3:17-4:1

GOSPEL: According to Luke 9:28b-36 (stand)

BISHOP’S LENTEN REFLECTION [The facilitator broadcasts the audio-video presentation by Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J., Bishop of Tyler speaking on the topic: The Second Precept of the Church.]

SECOND PRECEPT

"You shall confess your sins at least once a year"

The second precept ("You shall confess your sins at least once a year") ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness. CCC 2042

In light of Bishop Corrada’s reflection on the second precept of the Church, discuss the following:

“We go gathering our sins – mortal and venial, our wounds, our transgressions that we do to God, to our neighbors, and to ourselves and we present them there for God to forgive. And, this action builds the relationship between you and God and God and you.”

Outside the Sacrament of Reconciliation, is there any other means through which we receive forgiveness of sins? (CCC 1395, 1434)

³ *ibid* p. 618

⁴ *NJBC*, p. 710

Is it sufficient to ask God for his forgiveness in prayer with a contrite heart? (CCC 1452, 1456) Why do we confess to a priest? (CCC 1461)

Can we build relationship with God and God with us if we seldom, if ever, approach him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (no hint, think it through)

CONCLUSION: As we go our separate ways and until we come back together again, let each of us continue to ask: “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

CLOSING PRAYER –

Father, speak your Word to my heart.
Holy Spirit, help me to listen intently.
Answer me Good Teacher,
What must I do to inherit eternal life?
Tell me and I will do it
with the help of your grace that comes to me
through the intercessions of our Blessed Mother,
Mary Most Holy. Amen.

“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Lk 18:18

LENTEN REFLECTION 2010
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

GATHERING PRAYER [Clergy or, if no clergy is present, the group facilitator leads the participants into this Lenten observance with this prayer]:

Prayer for Abundant Life

Lord Jesus, Mercy of the Father, hear my prayer.
Guide my penance. Be with me in fasting.
Take and receive the alms I give your Church.

Father, be pleased with these things I do,
for the deeds of my earthly life are my worship of you,
the activity of my eternal life that is now.

Most Holy Spirit, grant that I may have life
and have it more abundantly.

Mary, Mother Most Holy,
fill us with love for your son, Jesus. Amen.

GETTING FOCUSED: [At the beginning of each session, the facilitator reads slowly the following passage from the Gospel of Luke. Participants are allowed a few minutes to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart. They then answer privately the questions that follow. Participants are free to share relevant insights.]

(all stand)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

18:18-23

¹⁸ An official^A asked him this question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"^B ¹⁹ Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."^C ²⁰ You know the commandments,^B "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother."^D ²¹ And he replied, "All of these I have observed from my youth."^E ²² When Jesus heard this he said to him, "There is still one thing left for you^F: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."^G ²³ But, when he heard this, he became quite sad, for he was very rich.^H

The Gospel of the Lord

REFLECTION:

^D “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother.” Here Jesus affirms the necessity of observing God’s Law for the sake of our salvation.⁵ Earlier in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus emphasized the “doing” of God’s Greatest Commandment as necessary to have eternal life: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. . . do this and you will live.” (Lk 10:27-28).

How is reception of the Holy Eucharist an observance of God’s greatest command? (CCC 1396)

As Catholic disciples of Jesus, is reception of the Holy Eucharist necessary if we are to have eternal life? (CCC 1384)

How are we to properly prepare ourselves for so great and so holy a moment as the reception of the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ? (CCC 1385-1387, 1415)

REFLECTION:

^F “There is still one thing left for you . . .”. Elsewhere, in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says instead, “You are lacking in one thing. . .”(Mark 10:21).

What is Jesus saying to us when he says, “You are lacking in one thing...”? Is it the virtue of humility, reliance on God alone, detachment from material goods, self-denial, a merciful heart, or poverty of spirit? Something else? (CCC 1397)

In our relationship with God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – what might be one thing left for us to do? (no hint, think it through)

[One (or different participants) reads each of the following OT, NT and Gospel texts slowly for all to hear and between each reading, allows a moment of quiet to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart.]

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15

NEW TESTAMENT READING: Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

GOSPEL: According to Luke 13:1-9 (stand)

BISHOP’S LENTEN REFLECTION [The facilitator broadcasts the audio-video presentation by Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J., Bishop of Tyler speaking on the topic: The Third Precept of the Church.]

⁵ *NJBC* p. 702

THIRD PRECEPT

"You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season"

The third precept ("You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season") guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and center of the Christian liturgy. CCC 2042

In light of Bishop Corrada's reflection on the third precept of the Church, discuss the following:

Reception of ". . . the Eucharist is a Precept of the Church that brings us directly into the relationship of love between Christ who is God and man and us and then takes us in that relationship into heaven itself, into eternal life."

Why does the Church warmly recommend that we receive Holy Communion when we participate in the celebration of the Eucharist and require us to do so at least once a year? (CCC 1404-1405)

Does the third precept impose upon us church law or is church law a statement of who we are in reality – a communion in Christ? (CCC 1416-1417)

CONCLUSION: As we go our separate ways and until we come back together again, let each of us continue to ask: "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

CLOSING PRAYER –

Father, speak your Word to my heart.
Holy Spirit, help me to listen intently.
Answer me Good Teacher,
What must I do to inherit eternal life?
Tell me and I will do it
with the help of your grace that comes to me
through the intercessions of our Blessed Mother,
Mary Most Holy. Amen.

Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Lk 18:18

LENTEN REFLECTION 2010
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

GATHERING PRAYER [Clergy or, if no clergy is present, the group facilitator leads the participants into this Lenten observance with this prayer]:

Prayer for Abundant Life

Lord Jesus, Mercy of the Father, hear my prayer.
Guide my penance. Be with me in fasting.
Take and receive the alms I give your Church.

Father, be pleased with these things I do,
for the deeds of my earthly life are my worship of you,
the activity of my eternal life that is now.

Most Holy Spirit, grant that I may have life
and have it more abundantly.

Mary, Mother Most Holy,
fill us with love for your son, Jesus. Amen.

GETTING FOCUSED: [At the beginning of each session, the facilitator reads slowly the following passage from the Gospel of Luke. Participants are allowed a few minutes to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart. They then answer privately the questions that follow. Participants are free to share relevant insights.]

(all stand)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

18:18-23

¹⁸ An official^A asked him this question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"^B ¹⁹ Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."^C ²⁰ You know the commandments,^B "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother."^D ²¹ And he replied, "All of these I have observed from my youth."^E ²² When Jesus heard this he said to him, "There is still one thing left for you^F: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."^G ²³ But, when he heard this, he became quite sad, for he was very rich.^H

The Gospel of the Lord

REFLECTION:

^G In the final verse, Jesus tells the official – in a very specific way – what he must do to have eternal life: “sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Jesus does not tell every disciple to sell all we have and give to the poor. What is Jesus telling us? (CCC 2544-2545, 2556)

Fasting is a form of penance through self-denial that not only unites us to the poor in a special way, it prepares us for the liturgical feasts and reception of Holy Eucharist. Fasting also helps us to gain “mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.”⁶ Then what does fasting have to do with inheriting eternal life? (CCC 2547)

[One (or different participants) reads each of the following OT, NT and Gospel texts slowly for all to hear and between each reading, allows a moment of quiet to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart.]

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Joshua 5:9a, 10-12

NEW TESTAMENT READING: Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

GOSPEL: According to Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (stand)

LENTEN REFLECTION [The facilitator broadcasts the audio-video presentation by Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J., Bishop of Tyler speaking on the topic: The Fourth Precept of the Church.]

FOURTH PRECEPT

"You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church"

The fourth precept ("You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church") ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart. CCC 2043

In light of Bishop Corrada's reflection on the fourth precept of the Church, discuss the following:

What does Bishop Corrada mean?: “Generosity in life is a wonderful gift... but generosity without prior reflection in prayer, in fasting, in penance is lost.” (CCC 1435, 1437)

⁶ CCC 2043

How might the penitential practice of fasting have kept the prodigal son close to his father? (CCC 1439)

CONCLUSION: As we go our separate ways and until we come back together again, let each of us continue to ask: “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

CLOSING PRAYER –

Father, speak your Word to my heart.
Holy Spirit, help me to listen intently.
Answer me Good Teacher,
What must I do to inherit eternal life?
Tell me and I will do it
with the help of your grace that comes to me
through the intercessions of our Blessed Mother,
Mary Most Holy. Amen.

“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Lk 18:18

LENTEN REFLECTION 2010
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

GATHERING PRAYER [Clergy or, if no clergy is present, the group facilitator leads the participants into this Lenten observance with this prayer]:

Prayer for Abundant Life

Lord Jesus, Mercy of the Father, hear my prayer.
Guide my penance. Be with me in fasting.
Take and receive the alms I give your Church.

Father, be pleased with these things I do,
for the deeds of my earthly life are my worship of you,
the activity of my eternal life that is now.

Most Holy Spirit, grant that I may have life
and have it more abundantly.

Mary, Mother Most Holy,
fill us with love for your son, Jesus. Amen.

GETTING FOCUSED: [At the beginning of each session, the facilitator reads slowly the following passage from the Gospel of Luke. Participants are allowed a few minutes to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart. They then answer privately the questions that follow. Participants are free to share relevant insights.]

(all stand)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

18:18-23

¹⁸ An official^A asked him this question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"^B ¹⁹ Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."^C ²⁰ You know the commandments,^B "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother."^D ²¹ And he replied, "All of these I have observed from my youth."^E ²² When Jesus heard this he said to him, "There is still one thing left for you^F: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."^G ²³ But, when he heard this, he became quite sad, for he was very rich.^H

The Gospel of the Lord

REFLECTION:

^G Let us revisit the final verse: Jesus tells the official – in a very specific way – what he must do to have eternal life: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then, come follow me. Interestingly, Jesus instructs the official that to gain “treasure in heaven,” he must engage in good works, deeds of righteousness. Specifically, he tells the official to give alms.⁷

That we too might gain “treasure in heaven,” what charitable actions does the Church encourage each of us to do? (CCC 2447, Pay particular attention to the fine print.)

Opening the discussion to a free flow of ideas, what specifically can we do as an example for each charitable action (work of mercy) noted above? (no hint, think it through)

REFLECTION:

^H “But, when he heard this, he became quite sad, for he was very rich” (v.23) The Gospels of both Matthew and Mark tell us that “he went away sad for he had many possessions.” (Mt 19:23 and Mk 10:22)

Allow participants to speculate: Scripture doesn’t tell us. Did the official then do as Jesus asked him? Did he sell all he had and give to the poor? Did he return to follow Jesus? Why do you think so? Why do you think not? (no hint, think it through)

In the silence of your heart, ask yourself: Does my response say anything about my own interior disposition?

[One (or different participants) reads each of the following OT, NT and Gospel texts slowly for all to hear and between each reading, allows a moment of quiet to reflect on its meaning and to probe the heart.]

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 43:16-21

NEW TESTAMENT READING: St. Paul to the Philippians 3:8-14

GOSPEL: According to John 8:1-11 (stand)

LENTEN REFLECTION [The facilitator broadcasts the audio-video presentation by Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J., Bishop of Tyler speaking on the topic: The Fifth Precept of the Church – Week 5]

⁷ ibid

FIFTH PRECEPT

"You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church"

The fifth precept ("You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church") means that the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability. The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his own abilities. CCC 2043

In light of Bishop Corrada's reflection on the fifth precept of the Church, discuss the following:

"Jesus calls us to be imitators of him. And this is from where almsgiving, providing for others, comes. This is what true maturity of the heart of the mind is. This is where the virtues of justice and prudence and temperance and courage take root in us. As St. Paul tells us we have to leave everything in life behind and move forward in life, but move forward with the object, the goal being Christ, being God, eternal life. We are a people who are in a dynamic work, a dynamic journey . . . As Jesus went in his journey in this life – to confirm death for our salvation – he showed us we have to provide."

Do we provide for and assist with the material needs of the Church because the law tells us we must or because we are imitators of Christ?

What does "each according to his own abilities" mean? Does this set the upper limit or the lower limit of our giving and assistance? When deciding how much to give and in what ways to assist, how do the virtues of justice, prudence, temperance, courage come into play?

What are some different ways we might assist with the material needs of the Church? How might these ways of assisting with the material need of the Church be called "works of mercy." We also provide for the material needs of the Church. Is providing for the material needs of the Church – almsgiving - one of the works of mercy?

CONCLUSION: As we go our separate ways and until we come back together again, let each of us continue to ask: "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

CLOSING PRAYER –

Father, speak your Word to my heart.
Holy Spirit, help me to listen intently.
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