

Homily  
28th Week in Ordinary Time  
Fr Danny

Good morning! Jesus is challenging us again, look out. It's coming.

I've always loved this Gospel passage. I remember the first time I really paid attention to it, really HEARD it, on my own confirmation retreat. And as I sat there as I was listening to the words of the Gospel, and I thought "How do you fit a camel through the eye of a needle?" See I had taken a sewing class, and I was horrible at it. Just threading the needle, you try and try, and you miss every time. How's a camel supposed to fit through that. Until I found out that's not exactly what Jesus is talking about in this Gospel.

Does anyone know what the eye of the needle is? What Jesus is talking about in today's Gospel is the night gate into a palace. It is about the size of one of our doors width wise, but only about 4 feet high. A camel fitting through here would have to be down on all fours and crawling. You can't bring any packs on top of that camel. Jesus is saying that it's easier for a camel to fit through that than for a rich person to get to heaven.

Well, dang it. Because everyone in here today is rich. It's said that if you have a bank account, if you have a car payment, if you have a mortgage, you are amongst the top 5-10% wealthiest people on the planet. Congratulations. You're rich. Now, that's not *really* what Jesus was talking about, when He was talking in today's Gospel.

But it does bring to mind the question of where do we place our value in life? Do we place our value in things, or do we place our value in relationships? For many of us, it's in our relationship with our things where we place our value, to be honest. "Oh my goodness! That car is so beautiful! I would give anything for it!" Would you give your soul? Would you give your family? Would you give your job? For some people, unfortunately, the answer would be yes.

We forget many times in our lives, that these lives we are living aren't immortal. Each and every one of us in this place today will die. I don't say that to be morbid, but I say it because I think we need to think about that more often. That when we die we can't take those things with us. But we are materialistic people, we want stuff.

One of the opportunities I had in seminary was to help out at a mobile meals place where we actually went out into the community in Kansas City and we took meals to the homeless. And without fail many of those who were

homeless, of course had no shelter, had no food, had very little clothing, but most of them also had iPhones. I look at that and I say, "Where are our priorities in life?" Is it more important for us to eat, to be able to feed ourselves, than to have our technology? Where are our priorities in life? What are our riches we are called to give up for the Lord? Uh oh, Father's talking about money! Dangerous area!

When we look at Scripture, after the fall of Adam and Eve, after they are cast from the garden, what was the first fight that we see in Scriptures? Who was it between? The brothers Cain and Abel. What were they fighting over? Who gave the better tithe to God. Did you give of your first fruits, or did you give of what was left over? We've been agonizing over this for millennia.

But I can say this: never when I have given to God sacrificially, have I lived without. Not once have I had to worry about putting food on the table, not once have I had to worry about a car payment. I'm taken care of by God. Those who are able to give up their riches, their mother, their father, their brother, their sister, their lands, their titles for the sake of God will receive a hundred-fold in return. Maybe not in this life but definitely in the life to come.

The problem though is for many of us we're so attached to these lives. Not a bad thing; it's a good thing to live this life well. But do we live this life well, or do we, 'well, live our life?' How do we function? What are our priorities? Last night I was talking about how Jesus brings across to this gentleman who was questioning him about eternal life, all of the commandments. And last week I had talked about that movie that I had seen that kind of put to test all of those commandments. And at the heart of each and every one of those is the question of who is mother, who is brother, who are we called to love?

Now in the Hispanic culture there is something called machismo. A macho personality that normally the men take on this role, responsibility. Where "I'm in charge, what I say goes." It's prevalent in the Hispanic culture. And so I made a very bold statement last night and I said, "You are not macho. Macho man Randy Savage wasn't macho. The only truly macho man who can have that personality is God." Because He has earned it. Because without Him we are nothing. Without Him we don't exist. So put aside that macho personality and *love*.

In my family growing up, when my grandfather died, the siblings hated each other. I've talked about my dad's family before where there was the yours, mine, ours, his and hers kids. Whether there are 17 siblings or 27 siblings, somewhere in there. And what was awesome was that for the funeral, everyone came together in love. For about five minutes. Then once the funeral was over, divisions began.

We stopped loving Grandpa, and we started loving what he left behind for us. Because at multiple times in his life, depending on how successful his rock quarry was, he was a millionaire. Which meant, if he's a millionaire, that money gets divided when he dies. That's what people were focused on. They forgot his life, they forgot his love, they forgot his legacy. The only thing they remembered was what he left for them financially. They missed the point.

But I think a lot of it, when I look back at it, was that Grandpa didn't teach them the point. Because he was that stoic, stereotypical father. Where dinner tables were silent because "Dad's had a long day and he doesn't want to have to deal with the kids talking at dinner." Rarely, I don't think ever did I hear him say the words "I love you" to any of his children. To his grandchildren he was pretty decent. Which made the children even more spiteful towards him when he died. But very rarely would he say the words to his children "I love you."

"Well they know that I love them, I don't have to say the words. Yes. You. Do. Fathers, I'm talking to all of you right now. **Tell your children that you love them.** Tell your wives that you love them. "Oh, but I get her flowers on her anniversary." Not good enough. Notice the women chuckling at that, not the men. "Father, come on man." Yeah, I'm calling you to a different type of love. Not a minimalistic love, but an all-encompassing all-embracing love. Tell your children you love them. And mean it. That's the hard part sometimes. Tell your wife that you love her. And mean it. That's definitely the hard part at times.

Some of the biggest struggles in our lives we have with our families. Why? Because there's not enough love. When we get married, it's not just two people coming together and splitting things down the middle. No, it's cutting apart those sides that made us individuals and becoming one solid unified couple embracing the love of God. If that's not how your marriage is, start working on it. If that is how your marriage is, keep working on it.

Cause you're going to have struggles in life. You're going to have those hurdles to overcome. But many times we're going so fast in our lives that we don't prepare ourselves for the hurdles. Has anyone ever gone to a track and field meet where they've had the actual hurdles? If you try and run the same speed the whole time, what's going to happen? You're going to fall flat on your face. Why? Because you didn't prepare yourself to make the jump. So why then do we think in our lives to we think we don't have to prepare ourselves for the obstacles that stand in front of us? "I can just do this by myself." Wham! Pride comes before the fall. Makes sense.

When it comes to relationships, when it comes to God, we have to trust in Him. But trusting in Him means relying on Him, relying on His grace, relying on His mercy, relying on His love for you and for me. That's important. I have to admit, I hated babysitting my siblings growing up. Because we grew up in the Barney generation. Some of you understand. I hated that show growing up. But it had one song on there that is so true. I won't sing it, don't worry. But I will say the words: I love you, you love me, we're a happy family. I love you, you love me, we're a happy family. Yes I quoted it again. It's important.

Happiness comes from love. Joy comes from love. All goodness in the world, all goodness in our lives, comes from love. But love can't be forced. Love is patient, love is kind, love is self-sacrificing. And that's where God is calling us to find our riches in this world. Not in material things that when we die they fail, when we die we don't have them anymore, but with love that lasts for eternity because it came from eternity.

Look at the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. When we die, we no longer have any hope, because when we die all that we have hoped for, eternal life, we already have. So when we die hope has been achieved. Look at faith. When we die our faith has been realized in God. And then we are finally reunited with Love. Which never fails. Faith, hope and love, the greatest of these is love because that's the one that never fails.

Of our own accord, as Jesus said in today's Gospel, we cannot reach eternal life. It is impossible. But with God all things are possible. So may we love one another. Tell your children you love them. Tell your wife you love her. Tell your parents you love them. Cause they need to hear it as much as you do.

The worst thing that I can hear at a funeral is "I loved my dad so much I just wanted to hear those three words." And I've heard it way too many times. "I wish I had told him more that I loved him, and I wish he had told me more that he loved me." I pick on the dads more because I hear it more often about them than about the women.

Because as men we don't like to get emotional. We don't like to talk about our feelings. We bottle them up inside until we just blow up one day. And I know that the stoic grittiness is masking a hurt individual on the inside. Because I've been there, I've done that. It's not fun. That's miserable. Why live in misery when you can live in love?

My brothers and sisters, love one another. Store up treasures in heaven, don't worry about the stuff here on earth. That'll take care of itself. Now with that being said, you have to pay your taxes, you have to pay your bills, you've got to

tithe to the church (can't have a homily about tithing without talking about that!)  
but at the end of the day, God will provide. Because God is love. So love one  
another.