



Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle C

Fr. Josh Miller / September 26th, 2010

Back when I was 13, I decided I'd read the Bible cover to cover. It took me about eight months to do, reading at night (sometimes well into the night), and it filled me with wonder and awe concerning God and the mysteries of faith.

One night, while I was reading through the Old Testament, something got into my head. I said to myself, "Wow! Wouldn't it be great if God manifested himself right here, right now, for me to see? I'd never have any problems believing if I saw a miracle like that! It'll be perfect, and I can dedicate my entire self to God without reservation! So come on, God, show yourself! This will be awesome!"

So after I invited him to give me my own private little miracle, I waited. And I waited. And I waited.

Seventeen years later, and I still haven't had that private little miracle.

But somewhere along the line, I realized I didn't need that miracle. Enough has been given, and this is one of the points our Gospel makes here today. We have the testimony of Moses, the prophets, the apostles, all of the great saints, and God himself in Jesus Christ. In reality, an *abundance* has been given, more than you or I need to see for proof of God's existence throughout the history of our salvation.

What's more, we're able to reason that God has to exist. St. Thomas Aquinas gave five proofs for the existence of God, and one of these proofs is based upon an observation that philosophers have been making for thousands of years: nothing comes from nothing. So, if nothing comes from nothing, or to put it in more scientific terms, if energy is neither created nor destroyed but merely

preserved within a system, where did everything, where did all of this "something" come from?

What St. Thomas (who was working with Aristotle) tells us is that if you follow the creation of the earth, the sun, and the universe as a whole, you have to have some unmoved mover, a being who always is and always was, who created all things and was not created.

I could go on for hours about the rational, reasonable proofs for the existence of God, but I'll spare you... for now. The point here is that God allows us to know his existence through rational, logical discourse. The proof is there, if we allow our minds to seek after it. Even on an intellectual level, enough has been given.

And if we look at our own lives, if we recall when we have felt the presence of God, if we look at those times where God's grace has been evident in our lives, we also know the existence of God. If we look at those times where God has given us forgiveness when we needed it, or blessed us through prayer, or given us the strength we need to face a particularly difficult situation, we know the existence of God, and we know it down to our bones, a way that penetrates us more deeply than history or philosophy ever can. If we look at our lives with just a modicum of honesty, we know that enough has been given.

I suspect the reason the rich man from our gospel has problems is because he never paused to consider that. He never paused to consider all those ways God had blessed him, all those ways the Lord walked by his side when he needed him. He never turned his eyes up towards the Heavens in thanksgiving, and only when it was too late for him did he

realize that he'd squandered all he had been given.

But poor Lazarus, "covered in sores" and probably a leper, had nothing. I suspect he counted everything he received as a gift. One of society's outcasts, it was impossible for him to get a job, to earn a living, to provide for himself. So whenever he received the smallest blessing from the Lord, he knew that sense of thanksgiving, that sense that God had indeed provided him with enough. The rich man had to be content with the blessings of this life because he never allowed those blessings to move him to something beyond this life.

Every sunrise, every breath, every pain, every sorrow, every joy; all of these are cause for rejoicing, for thanking the great source of life. And if we train ourselves to give thanks to the Lord for all we have received in this life, only then will we have the capacity, the ability to appreciate Him in the next life.

Seventeen years later, and I still don't need that kind of magic-moment miracle I requested at 13, when I wanted God to manifest himself in my bedroom. In fact, I realize now that we have something far greater than anything I could have possibly received that day. I realize that through the gift of the Eucharist, in the Body of Christ, God gives us his flesh and blood, the totality of what one can give to another. Indeed, enough has been given, because God has given us all.