

Day 187 – Wednesday, September 23 – What do we really need

In the first reading from Mass, from the book of Proverbs, the author is praying that God would give him neither poverty nor riches. Now I can understand that one would not pray for poverty. No one likes to be poor, all of us like our creature comforts. But not to pray for riches; what is with this?

Once in a while God gives us a wake-up call. The accident was such a wake up call for me. When I think about it, it could have gone a number of different ways. If it had, it would not have mattered how much money I had in the bank—I could have been richer than Bill Gates---but where would it have gotten me. Rather than pray for poverty, or riches, we need to pray for that which we really need: love, compassion, a desire to serve the Lord. These are the true treasures. These are the treasures that we store in heaven, where neither moth, nor rust destroys. Think about it, I challenge you to think about who was one of the ten richest persons 100 years ago, 500 years ago, 1000 years ago. Any names? But think about someone, who through their selflessness changed the world: 100 years ago, 500 years ago, 1000 years ago. My bet is you can think of at least a few.

If all of us started living in such a way that our love, compassion and desire to serve the Lord shone through...well let's just say I would love to see that world.

The following is one of my favorite stories. From *Song of the Birds* by Anthony de Mello

TO KNOW CHRIST

A dialogue between a recent convert and an unbelieving friend:

“So you have been converted to Christ? ”

“Yes.”

“Then you must know a great deal about him. Tell me: what country was he born in?”

“I don't know.”

“What was his age when he died?”

“I don't know.”

“How many sermons did he preach?”

“I don't know.”

“You certainly know very little for a man who claims to be converted to Christ.

“You are right. I am ashamed at how little I know about him. But this much I know: Three years ago I was a drunkard. I was in debt. My family was falling apart. My wife and children would dread my coming home each day. Now I have given up drink; we are out of debt; ours is a happy home. All this, Christ has done. This much I know of him!”

To really know. That is, to be transformed by what one knows.

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. - James Finley

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein