

On Earth as in Heaven: Thy will be done

10/27/2018 Andy Figueroa

Jesus taught his disciples to pray, “*OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. ...*” Book of Common Prayer

Thy will be done, not my will. How different that is from the narcissistic spirit of this age, resulting in record levels of unhappiness and anger.

By contrast, in his two-part Sunday Bible College lessons beginning on August 26, *Top Seven Ways to Improve Your Spiritual Health*, Father Cunningham encouraged us with practical means to pursue holiness by stepping up our ascetic practices (among other things) through self-denial, alms giving, and sacrifice. Such practices help us detach from material things leading to freedom from excessive love of money and what money can buy.

After his encounter with the rich young ruler, Jesus said, *How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.* (Luke 18:24b-25) Likewise, St. Paul wrote, *The love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.* (1 Timothy 6:10)

The Quaker author, Richard J. Foster, in his classic *Celebration of Discipline*, puts it like this, “We really must understand that the lust for affluence in contemporary society is psychotic. ... Until we see how unbalanced our culture has become at this point, we will not be able to deal with the mammon spirit within ourselves”

Fortunately, we don’t have to give it all away, which would lead to countless unintended consequences. We have in our liturgy the offertory, one of our primary acts of worship, when every week, a portion of our affluence is taken to the altar and placed before God. When our giving is sacrificial, deliberate not incidental, and proportional, according to the blessings the lord has provided, we are practicing a spiritual discipline that can lead to freedom from the mammon spirit and bring the abundance of God into our lives.

This is the connection between the practice of giving as a spiritual discipline and the pursuit of holiness. Father Cunningham called the pursuit of holiness the “One Metric That Matters,” the one measurable thing which indicates our spiritual health, individually and corporately. A Christian growing in holiness is a healthy Christian.

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