

Fr. O'Connor's Homily
November 8, 2020

I hate to admit it but I'm not crazy about this Gospel, but I love the lesson it teaches us. So, let me tell you a wonderful story.

Years ago, the actor William Gargan discovered he had cancer. Ironically at that time, he was playing the role of a man who had cancer in the play "The Best Man".

36 hours after the cancer was discovered, Gargan was in surgery. Looking back over those 36 hours, Gargan said he learned two important things about himself.

First, he learned that he was not afraid to die. He had prepared himself for that moment. Second, he learned that Jesus was his friend. From his youth Gargan had made it habit to talk to Jesus daily. He used the same memorized prayer. Now in his moment of need, that prayer made him aware of the deep relationship it had helped him cultivate with Jesus.

Some of you may recognize this prayer,

The prayer before the crucifix

Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus,
while before Thy face I humbly kneel and,
with burning soul,
pray and beseech Thee
to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments
of faith, hope and charity;
true contrition for my sins,
and a firm purpose of amendment.

While I contemplate,
with great love and tender pity,
Thy five most precious wounds,
pondering over them within me
and calling to mind the words which David,
Thy prophet, said of Thee, my Jesus:
"They have pierced My hands and My feet,
they have numbered all My bones."
Amen.^[2]

The two lessons I learn once again from this Gospel are:

1. The suddenness with which the end comes.
2. Be prepared.

I am aware that I am a procrastinator. I put things off for another day. So I don't understand the foolish virgins in today's Gospel. What about you?

What does procrastination look like? Well, it has a thousand faces. For example, allowing a grudge to gnaw at you instead of talking to the person with which you have the grudge. Avoiding taking responsibility for some past hurtful action, refusing to face up to the half-truths we carry in our heads, putting off acknowledging an addiction that is harmful, refusing to help people in need of love or money.

How do I begin to overcome my procrastination? Well, I don't have all the answers, but I love the story William Gargan tells about praying the Prayer Before the Crucifix every day. And I have been deeply impressed by people who live the 12 step programs such as AA, Gamblers Anonymous, Alanon, Sex and Lovers Anonymous.

A wonderful way to be alert and prepared is to have a truth teller in our lives. Don't be afraid to look for a Spiritual Counselor for yourself. There are plenty of good spiritual counselors. So we listen to Jesus: Be Prepared.