

## Commentary to the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time



There was a time when God seemed an ally of the rich. Well-being, luck, abundance of goods were considered signs of his blessing.

The first time the Hebrew word kesef (which means silver or more commonly, money) appears in the Bible, it is referred to Abraham. He “was very rich in cattle, silver and gold” (Gen 13:2). Isaac “sowed crops and in that year harvested a hundredfold” (Gen 26:12-13). Jacob owned countless “oxen, asses, flocks, men-servants and maidservants” (Gen 32:5). The Psalmist, too, does not know better than to promise to the just one, saying: “Abundance and wealth will be in your home” (Ps 112:3).

Poverty was a disgrace. It was believed to be a result of laziness, idleness and debauchery. “A little sleep, a little drowsiness, a little folding of the arms to rest, poverty will come” (Prov 24:33-34).

A change of perspective arrives with the prophets. One begins to understand that the assets accumulated by the rich are not always the result of their honest work and the blessing of God, but often of cheating, violations of the rights of the most vulnerable.

Even the wise men of Israel denounce the rich; “But the rich man who has had his fill cannot sleep” (Eccl 5:11). “Gold has ruined many” (Sir 8:2).

Jesus considers both greed of goods of this world and honestly earned wealth, as almost insurmountable obstacles to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The deceitfulness of wealth chokes the seed of the Word (Mt 13:22); it tends to gradually conquer the whole human heart and leave no space for God nor for the neighbor.

Blessed is he who makes himself poor, who is no longer anxious for what he will eat or drink, who does not worry about clothes and does not get restless for tomorrow (Mt 6:25-34). Blessed is he who

shares all that he has with the brothers/sisters.

To internalize the message, let us repeat:

“Christ, though he was rich, became poor to make us rich.”

Fr. Fernando Armellini