

Meditation 2014-03-05
Ash Wednesday
Meditation Theme: “What Holds The Most Value?”

Place yourself in the presence of Jesus Christ. Make sure He knows that every thought, action, and experience of today is dedicated exclusively to Him.

The Scenario: From the Gospel of today’s Mass

AT that time, Jesus said to His disciples: when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee. Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust, and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.

Point 1. – Jesus tells us to avoid the hypocrites who make penance into a public show to display their piety, expecting the praise and admiration of others.

Point 2. – If we do penance, it should be enough that God the Father knows it. He does, after all, know everything, including how much our particular penances cost us.

Point 3. – Jesus tells us to store up for ourselves “Treasures in Heaven.” Penance is meritorious, and our merits, insufficient in themselves to win Heaven, are added to the Merits of God’s supreme sacrifice that made them not only possible, but valuable as well.

Meditation: Heaven is not guaranteed to me. Jesus paid the price that I could never hope to pay myself. That is the Redemption. I am redeemed! All men have been redeemed; that is, the price has been paid for them. But not all men will be saved.

If someone buys a theater ticket and gives it to me, I can go into the theater and watch the movie, or I can refuse and go do something I consider more important. It is the same with the price of my redemption. The price has been paid. The question remains, do I want to go in? Do I think it is important to go to Heaven? Is it important to me? Is it, like so many living in the world readily tell me, only this world that has value? Is this world all about which I need to be concerned? Is there value beyond these physical boundaries?

If I consider the teachings of the Church concerning Salvation, do I understand that it is much more than Redemption? Jesus has paid the price for me, of course, but does that automatically get me into Paradise? Don’t I have to “use the ticket He has bought for me?” And If I go into the theater, don’t I also want popcorn, and candy, and pop? All good things, but they cost more than the price of the ticket. If I get into Heaven, are there spiritual equivalents to these? Extra graces? Additional levels of Charity? Does doing penance help me to acquire these? Does doing penance

build up treasure for me? Do I want to claim these treasures in Heaven? Do I act as if I really want to go there? Sin will keep me out of Heaven. Knowing this, do I avoid it? Always?

If I have build up a real treasury in Paradise, do I want to go there and get it? Do I always consider what will help me to get it? Do I always watch out for what will keep me from getting it? What, after all, is most important to me?

Colloquy: Take a minute or two to converse with God, in any of His three Persons, or the Triune God complete in Himself. Tell Him what you have learned from your meditation, and thank Him for it.

Hold the Gain: Consider what you can do to keep the fruits of your meditation. Try to plan how you can think of them through the day, and through the days ahead. Come up with ways you can apply your conclusions to what you do in your everyday life, conversations you engage in, the choice of what movie to watch, what books you choose to read.