



Bringing Home the Word

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

July 3, 2022

The “Gospel” of Health and Wealth

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

There’s a current in modern Protestantism that is popularly called the “prosperity gospel.” Although rejected by many Protestants, it still has its disciples. Its basic tenet is that if you’re faithful and generous with God, he will bless you with prosperity in this life. The kind of prosperity expected is usually health and wealth. The natural conclusion is that economic blessings are signs of your faith. The opposite would also be true. If you are poor, you just might lack faith or God’s favor.

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 66:10–14c

For thus says the LORD: I will spread prosperity over [Jerusalem] like a river, like an overflowing torrent.

Galatians 6:14–18

From now on, let no one make troubles for me; for I bear the marks of Jesus on my body.

Luke 10:1–12, 17–20 or Luke 10:1–9

[Jesus] said to them, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few.”

Without a doubt God promises us prosperity. Just look at the prophesy of Isaiah in today’s reading. Yet, as always for Christians, we have to read the Old Testament in the light of Christ and his revelation in the New Testament. The life of Jesus, the Son of God, was the most prosperous life ever lived. Yet, he wasn’t rewarded with material wealth. In fact, he was downright poor. Although he was faithful and generous, God blessed him with challenges and, ultimately, the cross.

Paul didn’t glory in his apostolic successes but in the cross of Jesus. He knew that the victory of the cross was his greatest treasure. He saw in his difficulties not a curse, but a sign of his true authenticity as a follower of Christ.

We should no doubt strive for sufficient material progress and prosperity for ourselves, our family, our business, and our nation. But above all we should strive for eternal prosperity, which is living and rejoicing that our names are written in heaven, whether we are materially wealthy or not.

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A Word from Pope Francis

If politics must truly be at the service of the human person, it follows that it cannot be a slave to the economy and finance. Politics is, instead, an expression of our compelling need to live as one, in order to build as one the greatest common good....

Address to United States Congress,
Washington, DC, September 24, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Is material wealth too much of a concern of mine?
- How can my family and I learn to focus on eternal treasures?

Perfecting a Vision, Pursuing a Dream

By Paige Byrne Shortal

This week, as we celebrate American Independence Day, I've been thinking about the poem, "The New Colossus," written by Emma Lazarus and inscribed on the Statue of Liberty:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
the wretched refuse of your
teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost
to me.

I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

Several years ago our family had the opportunity to visit Washington, DC. One warm evening we sat on the high steps of the Capitol and listened to Judy Collins sing "Amazing Grace." As her lovely voice rang out, "Through many dangers, toils and snares we have already come . . ." I thought of the dreams of the founders of our country.

These holy visions of freedoms lived only in dreams before the dream-come-true of America. Our founders were Utopians, trying to create heaven on earth, but the dreams were flawed because they were exclusive: In our young nation, I could not have voted, nor my Hispanic sons, nor could people without property. But a good vision is worthy of appropriation, so women and people of color and the poor struggled and fought and gained the rights we take for granted today.



Just in my lifetime our country has made enormous strides toward living out those original ideals. Our children may find it hard to imagine a world where a black child drank from a different water

fountain or attended a separate school. Our daughters cannot imagine a time when a university education was only realistic for their brothers.

Our family also visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. One exhibit memorialized the passengers of the *St. Louis*, which sailed in 1939 with 937 passengers, most of them Jewish people fleeing Germany for Cuba. Only 22 were allowed entry. Cuban officials claimed the remaining passengers' visas, bought from corrupt German officials, were invalid. For five days the ship lingered in the waters within sight of Florida and freedom, petitioning for sanctuary, but the United States had strict quotas and they were sent back to Europe. At least 250 died under Nazi occupation.

On Independence Day, our nation celebrates the conviction and the vision of those who founded our country. As much as we feel burdened by a struggling economy and the threat of terrorism, still we are a place of

refuge longed for by many. There are no borders when it comes to human dignity—no borders of race or gender or national origin or religion or wealth. As we celebrate the progress toward the realization of our founders' ideals for all citizens, perhaps we can also pray for the wisdom, courage and generosity to help others realize the dream of America.

The passengers of the *St. Louis* never saw the statue Emma Lazarus called *Mother of Exiles*. I wonder if any of them knew her poem. Emma Lazarus was Jewish.

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PRAYER

*Ever living God, give us the grace
to protect the gift of freedom
and bless our efforts to embrace
a freedom that brings abundant
life for all and leads us to
true happiness in you. Amen.*

From *Prayers for Our Country*,
by Deborah Meister and Paige Byrne Shortal

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 4–9

Monday, Weekday:
Hos 2:16, 17b–18, 21–22 / Mt 9:18–26

Tuesday, Weekday:
Hos 8:4–7, 11–13 / Mt 9:32–38

Wednesday, Weekday:
Hos 10:1–3, 7–8, 12 / Mt 10:1–7

Thursday, Weekday:
Hos 11:1–4, 8e–9 / Mt 10:7–15

Friday, Weekday:
Hos 14:2–10 / Mt 10:16–23

Saturday, Weekday:
Is 6:1–8 / Mt 10:24–33

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