

If I were to ask you, who your favorite saint is? Who would you name? St. Francis, St. Therese of Lisieux, Mother Teresa, St. Anthony, who? No matter what name you come up with one thing that they would probably all have in common was the simplicity of their lives, their poverty. Today in Rome, one of the great saints of the modern time, was canonized, the martyr, Bishop Oscar Romero. And why was Romero killed? Because he defended the poor of El Salvador against the injustices perpetuated by the tyranny of the ruling class.

Jesus in the Gospel is asked a question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life? (Repeat) The first part of the answer, be a good person, live a moral life, keep the commandments.

“‘Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.’ And Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’” You desire eternal life; you wish to be holy; you wish to be a saint. Are you willing to give it all up? But this is a hard passage of scripture, how far does Jesus want us to go when he says –You lack

The French Philosopher Simone Weil wrote,

“The hero wears armour, the saint is naked. Now armour while keeping off blows, prevents any direct contact with reality and above all makes it impossible to enter into supernatural love. If things are really to exist for us they have to penetrate within us. Hence the necessity for being naked; nothing can enter into us while armour protects us both from wounds and from the depths which the wounds open up.” The hero wears armour but the saint is naked, or the saint is poor. **The saint has let go of those things that we wear to protect ourselves from being wounded by love and from the healing that comes from laying our wounds open before the Lord.**

You know, one of my favourite saints is saint Francis of Assisi, a man of passion, peace, and great love for God. But when it came to poverty he took today’s Gospel quite literally. In the middle of Assisi, in the town square, he stripped

down to nothing and handed his clothes back to his father. He renounced everything because he wanted to follow the Lord.

I know I could never do that and besides it would not be a pretty sight.

But we all need to ask, “What needs to be laid bare before the Lord.” What armour have I thrown up that doesn’t allow the Lord to touch me at the core of my being? I may be physically poor but filled with anger, bitterness, hatred, envy, which create that spiritual barrier that the Lord cannot pierce. I may have lots of stuff, but my addiction to things, my addiction to shopping is simply a sign of wound that I have not laid open before the Lord. In either case my reality is not touched by the reality of the supernatural, of divine love.

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I would just like to conclude today by listening to today’s second reading so that we can put into context this command of Jesus to sell what we own and to come follow him.

“The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **And before God no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render account.**”