

August 18, 2026, Tuesday of the 20th Week

[Ezekiel 28:1-10; Matthew 19:23-30](#)

H

O M I L Y

In the Gospel of yesterday, the man who sought perfection but was not ready to give up his great possessions to follow Jesus went away sad. Jesus took this opportunity to reflect with his disciples on how difficult it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. This is difficult because only simple hearts—that is, undivided hearts—can enter the kingdom. The heart of a true disciple cannot be divided between Jesus and anything else. Now, the wealth to which we can become attached—and which can monopolize our heart and prevent it from giving itself totally to God—can take many forms. It may be great material wealth; but this wealth can also be intellectual, such as the thirst to accumulate knowledge. It can be emotional, such as the need to possess another person or the need to be loved by everyone. It can be the need to exercise power over others in a thousand and one ways.

Let us not forget that the purpose of each of the renunciations involved in the commitment to monastic life is to foster this simplicity, this undivided heart. I do mean “foster” this simplicity... For it cannot be attained by human means. It is always a pure gift from God: “For man,” says Jesus, “this is impossible; but for God all things are possible.” Man must, however, open himself to it, and that is the purpose of monastic renunciations.

After making these renunciations at the time of our monastic profession, we may be tempted to ask, along with Peter, “What will we get in return?” . The question is misguided, for true love expects nothing in return. And yet, even though the question is misguided, Jesus answers it—and He does so with marvelous generosity. No! Our renunciations do not earn us anything in return; but to these humble gestures of love, God responds with a love that is entirely free—a hundredfold!

And the gratuitousness of this loving response from God is emphasized in another way by the fact that this love overturns all hierarchies of seniority or virtue, which are so important to us. First or last? That no longer matters at all in the Kingdom—and especially in God’s heart.

*** And today we commemorate the Martyrs of the Rochefort Pontoons, among whom were three monks of our Order