Of One Heart And Mind

There was a real spirit of cooperation in the early days of the church according to the Acts of the Apostles: “The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common” (4:32). It is a rare group indeed that is so united in purpose that they can be of one heart and mind.

Jesus, himself, was not able to accomplish this with his own disciples. For although they held things in common, Judas held the money bag and used to steal the contributions for his own selfish ends (John 12:6). When funds are stolen in a business, it is often from one of the most trusted employees who had worked very faithfully for many years. One must always guard against the sin of pride and a sense of entitlement.

Luke tells us that “There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them … put the proceeds at the feet of the Apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need” (4:34).

As the old adage goes, “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.” It is the rare business owner who takes a cut in salary in order to provide for better living conditions and a more just wage for his employees. Five years ago, Dan Price the chief executive officer of a company that processes credit card payments did just that. He recognized that many workers had to live far away from work because he did not pay them enough to live close to work. He took a $1.1 million cut in his own pay to raise the wages of those who were earning significantly less. His new pay structure helped about 60% of the employees to receive a substantial wage increase to better care for their families. Dan Price willingly sacrificed in order to improve the lives of others.¹

In the 1ˢᵗ Reading, Luke also tells us about Barnabas who sold a piece of property that he owned, then brought the money and put it at the feet of the Apostles (Acts 4:36-37). Every member of the church according to their means, has a responsibility to support the church. Everyone can and should offer their time, talent and treasure. “Be generous with the Church of God as the Church of God has been generous to you.” ²

Our best model for generosity is Jesus. He embraced a life of human poverty to help us understand God’s love for us and God’s desire to be united with us for eternity. Jesus often traveled from one community to another with no place to call home. “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head” (Luke 9:58).

At the end of our lives, we will be judged by Jesus, the Just Judge.

The king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ (Mt 25:34-36)

Jesus teaches, “For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.” (Luke 12:34). His heart is definitely with humanity. Let us recall one of the silent prayers from the Mass as the gifts our being prepared at the altar. As a little water is mixed with wine, the priest whispers, “By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.” If Jesus is willing to share his divinity with you, how might you be more generous in helping others and contributing to the common good?