

Tuesday 15 June 2021

Today is Tuesday, the 15 June, in the Eleventh Week of Ordinary Time.

Salt of the Sound sings 'Be Thou My Vision'.

Today's reading is from the Second Letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

Like many Christian leaders after him, Paul here is in the business of raising money. How do you feel about being asked for money? And indeed about actually asking for it?

In this passage, Paul is trying to encourage the church in Corinth to give money to express unity with other Christian communities. How does this idea of giving money to someone, or to an organisation, in order to become more closely united to others, make you feel?

Listen again: and try and hear how Paul is linking his money-raising to a powerful vision of the Christ who was rich and became poor for our sakes—the Macedonians have been generous because they've caught on to this truth.

What do you make of this sort of strategy? Fair enough, or a kind of manipulation? Perhaps you can spend a few minutes thinking of someone who makes real demands on you—bring your relationship with them to the Lord, and ask yourself and Him if there's anything that needs to change.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.