

***The Gospel of Luke,
a Theological Application to our Lives***

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Luke 10:38-42. Mary and Martha

³⁸ As they continued their journey, he entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him. ³⁹ She had a sister, Mary who sat at the Lord's feet listening to him. ⁴⁰ Martha, burdened with much servicing, approached him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me alone to serve? Tell her to help me." ⁴¹ The Lord replied to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. ⁴² There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

Observations:

- Martha welcomes Jesus; she is a "relative" of the benefactresses of Jesus and his disciples (8:1-3)
- Two sisters, Martha and Mary, live under the same roof
- Mary "at the feet" of Jesus: the repentant sinner (7:38); the former Gerasene demoniac (8:35); Jairus, the synagogue official (8:41); Mary, Martha's sister (10:39); an ex-Samaritan leper (17:16); proof of the resurrected body of Jesus (24:39-40); Saul-Paul describes his seminary formation in Jerusalem "sitting at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3).
- **διακονέω**, domestic and administrative activity (v. 40); also, **διακονία** of the word (Acts 6:4)
- Martha confidently and gently chides her guest
- Jesus says, "Martha, Martha", reminiscent of the repeated name in a person's address: "Abraham, Abraham" (Gen 22:1); "Moses, Moses" (Exod 3:4); "Samuel, Samuel" (1 Sam 3:4); "Daniel, Daniel" (en Theodocion, Dn 14,37); "Martha, Martha" (Lk 10:39); "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat" (Lc 22:31); "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4)—all critical interventions in the lives of the person addressed.

Along *the way*, after pronouncing the parable of the good Samaritan, attentive to the victim of an assault. *Jesus entered a village where Martha, attentive, like the Samaritan in the parable, or like the innkeeper, welcomed him into her house. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet and listened to him.*

One girl complains about her sister. Jesus might have answered, addressing each one, and us.

Martha, Martha, what is it about your sister that you don't get? You, your *diakonía* incarnate the gospel in the world. You build monasteries, schools, hospitals, clinics; you offer catechesis, education, and raising the consciousness in favor of human rights and social justice. You manage health care centers, visit prisons, manage hospice and home health care. You write letters to major religious superiors and government officials. Martha, Martha, you advocate for human rights, recycling, and clean air and water. But you're not alone. Where do your resources come from? Where do you refuel the spent energy? Your dedication and service are exhausting, and you risk ending up cynical, sad, harsh, skeptical, and empty. Martha, Martha, once the house has been built and you receive Jesus as guest, do you sit and listen to him?"

Jesus turns to her sister: "Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow? You don't live alone. Your sister built and maintains the house, receives the guests and furnishes your life of prayer, reading, and study."

"You two complement each other, Martha's business and your study and listening. But for the believer in a noisy, often violent world, listening is the oasis where the weary soul is refreshed. Without listening and dialogue with Jesus, the foundation crumbles. Mary, you and your sister live together; you need her as much as she depends on you. Human development, civic projects, even charity organizations are not enough to infuse life with meaning and joy. A person also needs silence and friendship with Jesus, the way, the truth and the life."

Gentle Listeners, Luke is forming a Christian community. When we first meet these two gospel girls at home, the gap between them widens, but Martha needs Mary like a tree grows from the root to nourish and sustain it. Without the root, all Martha's activity and occupation is reduced to pure political, social, or domestic interest, devoid of kindness, without the color and taste of faith in God. How many persons do we know, lay or religious, dedicated to the needs and urgencies of the world around, who neglect the friendship with God and are bereft of self-awareness? Have they neglected their center, their deepest self? Do they know who they are, where they come from and where they're going? We forget that our sister Mary conspires with God to infuse meaning in our service. Without Mary, the believer risks reducing himself to a functionary, a monastic community risks becoming a more or less efficient social, political, or educational institution ... without Mary.

Gentle Listener, deep down, don't we sympathize with Martha? She offered her home to Jesus and was stranded with the details of *diakonía*, the housekeeping and hospitality. Besides, we hear the poignant words, "Martha, Martha, many things perturb you, but really only one thing is necessary." Poor Martha, slighted, her clear skies became overcast after the Lord's little reprimand. After all, Miss Martha offered her best intentions, until her attentive love received the sting of her guest's remark. Did he really mean that also she should sit at his feet and listen, so everybody would go hungry, and the home would become a disaster? ¿Do we idealize Mary too much?

Jesus also invites Martha and all those who suffer the demands of *diakonía* to contemplate the Word incarnate that lodges in her heart. Jesus could have said: "Martha, thank you for your warm hospitality, the delicious food and peaceful rest. But, Miss Martha, can we spend some time together, speaking and listening? You're my best co-worker, Martha, but now, take a little rest, savor some *kairos* and be my friend; listen, while I renew your heart and remind you how much I love you. Then, go and serve."

The Benedictine motto articulates this. It's not simply "*ora*" nor only "*labora*." Neither is it "*labora et ora*"; the motto puts *ora* in the anchor position. But the balance between prayer and service is a challenge for everybody. In the monastery, the first service every day is not to report for the daily assignments, but the liturgy: "If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Rather than working morning till night, as if the world depended on us, we reserve spaces to enjoy the divine friendship, to thank God, to adore him and listen to his voice. The challenge is to find our niche as contemplatives in a revolving world, create space and a time (*kairos*) for God, listen to his voice, in order to infuse eternal value and love into so many activities that tug at our consciousness, impose on our agenda, sap our energy and distract our attention from the transcendent and eternal.

From a meditation on Jesus' visit to Martha's home, chart the assets and deficits of your prayer and service. Are you satisfied with your life choices? What can you change to live a better balance?

Luke 16:1-13. "Children of This World" ≠ "Children of the Light" (the Forgiving Administrator)

¹ Then he also said to his disciples, "A rich man had a manager who was reported to him for squandering his property. ² He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your administration because you can no longer be my manager.' ³ The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now that my employer is

removing me from my position as manager? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg.⁴ I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from office, they may welcome me into their homes.’⁵ He called in his employer’s debtors one by one. To the first he said, ‘How much do you owe my employer?’⁶ He replied, ‘One hundred measures of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.’⁷ To another he said, ‘And you, how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘One hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.’

⁸ The employer commended that dishonest manager for acting prudently¹. “For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

⁹ I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

¹⁰ The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones.¹¹ If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth?¹² If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours?

¹³ No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (≈ NAB)

Observations

- v. 1, the identity of the wealthy man. For Luke, the wealthy are those who accumulate fortune and material goods only for themselves, with no concern for others; their sole interest is the present life (cf. 12,13-21)
- v. 1, squandering property is the sequence of the prodigal son (chapter 15)
- v. 5, the forgiveness of debts, one by one
- v. 8, Who are the “children of this world” and who are the “children of the light”?
- v. 8, In what does the “prudence” (Greek **φρόνιμος**), consist, but astuteness in an awkward situation? Jesus does not condone dishonesty
- v. 8, the disciples of Jesus should be cunning in ensuring the true, lasting wealth
- v. 9, What is the “dishonest wealth” that the owner refers to?
- v. 10, Contrast of opposites: dishonest in small and great wealth ≠ trustworthy in small and great matters
- v. 11, not trustworthy with honest wealth > not entrusted with true wealth
- v. 12, not trustworthy with somebody else’s goods results in the lack of personal goods
- v. 13, one servant, two masters –hate and love– God and money

The parable of the shrewd manager is designed to confuse and wake up the listener. A business manager cheats his company, embezzles huge sums of money, gets

¹ The manager is commended for his cleverness or adroitness (Greek **φρόνιμος**) in an awkward situation.

caught in the audit and, just before he is fired from his white-collar job, he reissues the invoices of the debtors and expects their favor now that he is unemployed. Has he assumed their debts, cancelled his own commission or, by his finagling, defrauded the company? Who would hire such a rogue, knowing he is guilty of fraud? Jesus presents the scoundrel as doubly crafty and to our surprise his employer applauds the “prudence” in his double-dealing (v. 8: “the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light”). With this parable, Jesus challenges our supposed comfort zone and piety. The cleverness of criminal behavior in the present, passing world puts the relaxed interest in matters of eternal life to shame.

Jesus poses this parable as an example of how shrewdly we need to plot in matters related to the Reign of God. He counsels us to be swindlers for God’s Reign, to embezzle and fudge and use other people’s debts to our own advantage. He urges us who manage property that doesn’t belong to us to be astute, to marshal our “prudence” to gain eternal life; he thus employs the images of lying, stealth, embezzlement, and bribery, behavior that his audience would have been familiar with.

Jesus’ last comment is totally unexpected: “The employer congratulated that dishonest steward for acting prudently” (v. 8). The scoundrel did everything possible to ensure his future, and this surprise ending invites our reflection. And he declares with flourish: “The children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light” (v. 8).

A lesson? Jesus presents the clever, dishonest manager as the model of a strategist (cf. v. 8). He connived to profit from and make the best of every situation. He abused the employer’s confidence and his office to embezzle and steal. Once he was laid off, he worked the system to land on his feet. While he was still a manager, lowering the commission would have compromised his gains in the business deals. Just as he is being laid off the rascal takes advantage of his office one last time to gain “friends” and profit from his loss. From this scandalous example, Jesus teaches about underhanded dealings with regard to eternal life; he urges us to ply all our effort and “prudence” to get what we most want. Isn’t that what the woman at Jesus’ feet did? Didn’t the thief on the cross do the same?

Why are people who are ensconced in secular society more capable in their dealings than persons who hold citizenship in the reign of God? Experts in the business world know how to profit from every angle. They visualize the gains to their investments. So why are we, “children of the light,” less capable in our business dealings? Is it because the gains are long-term, and for the time being we defer our investments and relax our efforts? But how much time do we have? St. Benedict urges us, just as the evangelist is urging his community, “Hurry to do now what will be to your profit for all eternity” (RB prol.44).

To what riches does Jesus refer to when he says, “Make friends ... with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings”? (v. 9). He isn’t interested in money or material things. How many listeners of the good news don’t have the slush fund to guarantee their own future? Jesus refers to what is of eternal value –health, faith, hope, charity, strength of character, intelligence, and the most precious item in our safe deposit box, at times difficult to access, pardon. All these are riches or, better said, goods that we can dispose of and invest to our own advantage and advancement in God’s Reign.

It’s possible to ingratiate ourselves to Christ by our kindness, generosity, the gifts of our time, compassion, and patience. But if we don’t forgive, how will we approach our Father’s Reign, where the inventory is counted in terms of generosity, pardon, and mercy. And it’s a sad fact that a person who refuses to forgive, will only with difficulty tolerate God’s forgiveness.

How often in business dealings with others do we demand that someone pay and pay until the last drop of shame has been paid from a slight, an offense, an insult, an infidelity, or an indiscretion! We stick to the principle that he must pay up to the last penny! And even when we manage to forgive him, we don’t forget the offense, and that means, ultimately, that we haven’t pardoned sincerely, and somebody will have to go on paying.

This payback system doesn’t happen just with persons who trespass against us. What about forgiving yourself? Surely, you’ve done something you’re ashamed of. So, what! Welcome to the human race! Why beat yourself up over it? Like a perverted, vicious little god, you make yourself pay and pay, and you won’t

forgive and let go. God does. How much of our mental, emotional, and physical illness is tangled up with not forgiving and not relinquishing our shame and pain?

One thing is to forgive. Another is to want to forgive. But what about when we neither forgive nor want to? That's when we pray fervently to the Father of forgiveness to give us the desire to want to forgive... enemies, friends, family, parents, confreres, our Church, our very selves.

Gentle Listeners, Jesus said, "The *children of this world* are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the *children of the light*" (v. 8). This is preceded by the ending of the parable, "The master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently" (v. 8). In saying this, does Jesus condone double-dealing, fraud, and swindling of those who manage money and make a profit with impunity? No. Jesus counsels that it's to our best advantage to manage our debts prudently, forgive our debtors, as the heavenly Father has forgiven us.

St. Benedict (RB 4) -26) reminds us in the chapter on the instruments of good works, "The Love of Christ must come before all else. You are not to act in anger or nurse a grudge. Rid your heart of all deceit. Never give a hollow greeting of peace or turn away when someone needs your love." All the tools in the workshop are to be used to advance in the Reign of God; we employ the tools so we might find friends, advocates, and support after our dismissal from the present life.

When we hear this parable, we observe that dreadful manager cheats his employer. All the actors in the parable, except the employer, are in debt. Some owe huge debts of wheat and oil, so the manager uses his position to ease people's debts. The question that comes to mind is, how can we live with our debt? Can we learn from it, take advantage of it, or does it strangle you? Left to our own resources, we can't free ourselves completely from our debt. One alternative is, punish and push ourselves to do something beyond our capabilities, as the manager proposed in his monologue: "What shall I do now that my master is terminating my employment? I'm not strong enough to dig and I'm too ashamed to beg" (v. 3). Both alternatives are a dead-end street.

The manager devises a third alternative. Rather than slaving to pay off the debt, rather than demeaning myself to the point of begging, he forges relations with fellow

debtors. He does the unexpected: forgives the debtors of the company, in the hopes of being received in their lives and homes. He invests from his liability. The moral is evident: we should not separate ourselves from others; rather, forgive the debts we owe one another and receive each other in our homes, for we are all in debt to the same master.

The reversal of roles in the parable catches our attention: an administrator, moving enormous sums of money and taking decisions that affect lives, becomes “poor”, gives up his commission and his profit by pardoning the debtors. Acting thus, he gets a new source of income. True wealth is not what a person accumulates or hoards for oneself; it consists in what we give away. The moral of the parable: dispense mercy freely, pardon the offenses of others and be received into the eternal house.

Jesus counsels us to profit from our debt with God. He shows how we can live together with the inevitable debt, without losing our dignity. The key is pardon and mercy. Every day we pray: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” We’re hypocrites if we don’t forgive – or at least have the intention and make the effort – to forgive each other.

In the end, who are we, but managers of the goods of our divine patron? All we have comes from God, belongs to God, and has been loaned to us for temporal administration. What goods has God commended to us? St. Benedict prescribes that the abbot and superiors must give an account of their service (RB²). Including our families, our confreres, our community are loaned to us for our administration. There is no man or woman who has not cheated someone at least once in life, who isn’t in need of forgiveness. So, let us offer each other the forgiveness we expect for ourselves, so God may receive us in his house and in our eternal home.

Parable

² “Whatever the number of brothers he has in his care, let him realize that on judgment day he will surely have to submit a reckoning to the Lord for all their souls – and indeed for his own as well” (RB 2,38; cf. 2,7-8; 64,7 – an echo of the present passage).

There once was a business person, wealthy beyond belief. He kept his treasure in a warehouse –gold coins, crystal goblets, strings of pearls, diamonds and emeralds, and iron chests filled with rich linens and silver plates, precious art objects, and rare books. He had to absent himself for a time, so he gave one key to his trusted administrator with instructions to use what was in the storehouse just for emergencies. The duplicate key he kept in his own pocket.

So, what happened was emergency after emergency. Almost every day in the owner’s absence, the administrator would open the storehouse and take what was needed—a pearl for the hungry, a gold coin to the family whose crops had failed. One after another, need after need. The administrator gave and gave and kept giving. Finally, one day a woman approached him for money to buy medicine for her sick baby. He inserted the key into the lock, entered the warehouse, only to find it empty. Concerned that the lady would go away with nothing, he shut and locked the door and offered her the key. She took it gratefully and changed it for medicine and food. Thus, the administrator awaited the owner’s return.

Several days later he did return and, on the way to the warehouse the administrator tried to explain. There was this difficulty... and that emergency... The owner fit his key into the lock, opened the door, and found the storehouse brimming with treasure. The administrator could hardly contain his amazement. “The ‘key’ is,” the owner said, “give it all away.”

That’s essentially what Jesus did. He emptied himself of all this divine wealth, gave everything away, so we might have life in abundance. Jesus knows the relative value of things. On one occasion he estimated that two apparently insignificant coins of a poor widow were worth more than all the publicized donations of wealthy donors (Lk 21:1-4). With sadness he saw that the attachments in the present life impeded a wealthy official to follow him freely (Lk 18:18-23). At the end of his life, Jesus was sold for a price (Lk 22:5), a victim of a disciple’s greed, a measly thirty silver pieces!

Once upon a time a monk had more wealth than you can imagine – health, faith, hope, patience, charity, intelligence, and mercy –all kept under

lock and key in the warehouse of his heart. With emergency after emergency, every day the monk took from his treasury to respond to the needy. He gave freely, without thinking about himself and his own needs, without keeping something left over for his own use. And always, when the monk gave of his wealth, he found it doubled in value in what neither thieves can break in and steal nor moths and rust can corrode: the inexhaustible wealth of eternal life. The key is, give it all away, and thus invest your talents for eternal life.

The evangelist addresses a comfortable community in the city, and he preaches the gospel in language that his community would understand. The evangelist, in the teaching of Jesus, is aware of the challenges that wealth and comfort can pose to living the gospel.

The opposites in the parable are the bright “children of this world” and the “children of the light”. How do we use our resources to gain friends who, when we are dismissed from the present life, will receive us in an eternal mansion? How can we, “children of the light”, operate prudently to gain life eternal?

St. Benedict counsels us: “Run now and do what will be of profit for all eternity” (RB prol.44).

Three Hairpin, Switchback Curves

On a steep road up a mountain to Happiness, the goal of many pilgrims, the road is narrow, rough, and heavily travelled, with cars, pickups, busses, motorcycles, and trailers. Where the road isn't paved, there's gravel, and the potholes and bumps cause accidents; stretches of road are under construction. In the ascent, a person can never accurately calculate the time of arrival. When was little, I was impressed with the tight curves in the road, the poor visibility, and when I looked down the cliff on my side of the car, I could see at the bottom of the gorge or cliff the vehicles that had veered off the road and had crashed tragically on the rocks below—metal, plastic, and glass cadavers piled up, now immobile in their frustrated ascent. How many travelers had left home in hopes of arriving to the peak, and, due to a mishap or wrong turn, never arrived at their destiny?

In this road there are three extremely dangerous, switchback curves. About 5 miles up the road, the hairpin is named “Forgive God”; at the tenth mile, the curve is “Forgive Your Neighbor”; and another 10 miles farther, a particularly treacherous curve is known as “Forgive Your Self.” These perilous curves are where tragic accidents happen in this road to Happiness.

On milestone 5... what is the curve called? There we must negotiate things difficult to face in the big picture of life: terrorism, global warming, nuclear armament, drug trafficking, poverty, earthquakes, child abuse, and random violence—scourges on a massive scale that don’t require our forgiveness, but they cause us to wonder about why so much useless destruction and anguish in a world created by a good God. The answers to such questions are beyond comprehension, but they have a lot to do with our relationship with God. Also, turning into oneself, this is the curve where the traveler asks God: “Who am I and why am I the way I am? Why is my Self such a contradiction at times, why can’t I accomplish the things I need to? Why is my body the way it is, my feelings so volatile, my intelligence so scattered, my hips, my belly, my skin, my childhood, my adolescence, and my family –why is this who I am? Questions like these touch the question of God in my life, God who permitted or designed this odd collage of details in my personal growth and development. This curve, requiring a motorist to pay close attention to the road ahead, is called Forgive God.

At mile number 10 in the road... what is the curve called? Forgive Your Neighbor is a lot like Forgive God, but it still requires expert driving skills. Approaching this 180-degree curve, we need to slow down and ask, with Peter in the gospel, “How many times do I have to forgive my offender?” to which Jesus answers, “Every time, totally, and from your heart.” Criminy! How can that be? It’s as if Jesus put up a warning: Danger! Don’t apply the brakes on your pardon, or the results may turn out fatal!

Some people think that to refrain from forgiving others who hurt us doesn’t contradict Christian love. Such a posture has no gospel basis. At times, the memory of some evil suffered goes back to early childhood—it’s not rare for children to suffer hurt—and sometimes terribly—by their parents or other persons. Child abuse leaves deep scars that open time and again during life, and here, too, the grace of pardon must be applied. Every single human I know has suffered some unfairness or some failure in life, even in “good Catholic families.” I’m not

referring to the carelessness, the weakness, and the stepping-on-toes that is our daily bread. I mean heartless aggression where people are victims. One response to a personal assault is to freeze the forgiveness, play the victim role, particularly when we feel humiliated or threatened. But beware of the danger housed in the heart where we treasure the unforgiveable like a dog hoards a bone. This is a serious error, to convince ourselves that holding on to resentment is not a sin. Yes, it is sin, and it can even swell to be a serious fault. If it's not attended to, it grows like a cancer and the metastasis invades our whole being.

When we were young, we probably didn't experience the effects of our lack of forgiveness; we were more flexible, and forgiveness was part of the program of our growth. But with the hard knocks of experience, that strongbox of bitterness and resentment becomes more stubborn, and it affects all our life—how we respond to other persons, how we talk and think. If we don't apply the brakes, we may lose control, careen off the narrow shoulder of the road, and plunge to our death.

How terrible this curve, Forgive Your Neighbor, and pardon the faults that can never be justified. If we don't forgive, when we pray the Our Father, our lips might just burn like coals when we pronounce the words, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Applying the brakes to forgiveness makes us incapable of negotiating this hairpin curve. (If you feel helpless in this area of pardon, ask our loving God for the desire and the gift to be able to forgive. And remember always, forgiveness can't be reduced to how you or I feel about certain unpardonable faults done to us. Forgiveness is not a matter of feelings; it's a grace that conspires with our desire and intelligence.)

A third switchback curve on this ascent to Happiness is at mile number 20... What is it called? [Forgive Your Self] Perhaps we're more capable of forgiving God and our nasty neighbor than we're able to forgive ourselves. There's a noxious weed in the heart that sinks its roots in the original sin: the subtle consciousness that we are infected with evil, that we are somehow unworthy of real love, that we're unable to free us from ourselves. This sensitive area requires careful understanding, compassion, and patience—in a word, it requires a person to forgive him or herself.

When I hear the comment, “So-and-so is very demanding with herself but she’s very patient with other people” –the truth be told, I don’t believe my ears. Mercy and compassion are all or nothing. If a person despises herself, she will despise others. Perhaps we have all heard the sigh of a companion or friend, “I just don’t think I can ever forgive myself for that!” Well, gentle friends, such a statement is simply anti-Christian. We’d best apply the brakes as we approach this treacherous curve, hold firmly to the steering wheel, if we want to get to Happiness. If not, the lack of acceptance of our faults and weaknesses can steer us into a terrible accident. Oh, nobody denies that we are at times mean, tentative, clumsy, forgetful, incoherent, and we sin, but God’s grace never abandons us; our faults are pardoned because we are—each one of us—infinately loved. So why do we have such a hard time forgiving ourselves?

Gentle Listener, The lack of forgiving God is not unheard of in the human experience. Holding back on forgiving our neighbor is more common. But the lack of forgiveness of oneself is the riskiest obstacle in our path to Happiness.

Now finally, after getting through the three hairpin curves on this ascent, we arrive at a toll booth, the entrance into Happiness. There’s only one lane of traffic, and so many vehicles that—just what we want to avoid—there’s a terrible delay. Typical me! I become impatient, because the vehicle ahead just can’t seem to keep going, the motor dies and the driver keeps having to rev it up again; slowly he advances toward the toll booth.—too slowly. So I apply my pressure techniques. I flick on and off my headlights, I honk the horn, just a little at first, but then with more nerve. I ride his bumper. Then, after a long while, I get to the toll booth. At last, with the bill in my hand, I’ll pay the fee and enter Happiness! The jalopy ahead pulls out, and I drive up. The attendant, Simon Peter, greets me, and refuses the bill in my hand, and says, “That’s all right, go right on through!” and, to my great surprise, he informs me, “The driver of the car ahead paid the entrance fee for you.” “But, who is that person?” I asked, to which he responded, “The one in that junk heap up ahead. You know something? He’s the architect and engineer of this road, and his name is Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth.”

Home game

Take the highway of the three hairpin curves to Happiness. Take note of the dangers, the risks, the details and the delays that make the ascent more difficult in each one of the curves.

Let us prefer nothing to the Love of Christ.

May God bring us all together everlasting life.