

## FR HUGH'S HOMILY FOR 23rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

I like to buy a little present for those in the house when on holiday and I was in the renovated Battersea Power Station, now a shopping mall, impressive, but just a shopping mall, and I walked by the Rolex shop. What about a watch each for the four of them? One was going for £17,300. Would my Debit card, Apple pay, cover four of them?

I guess I might have got away with it for a brief time, but not long.

There are things we would love to do, but like the builder of the tower and the king, in the gospel, but we can only give of what we have. Otherwise our cards are rapidly 'maxed out' and we end up in the hands of short-term loan sharks, as so many poor people, and others, do today.

Luke in the gospel is talking about our relationship with God - discipleship. And as he does so often he is massively exaggerating to make his point. Yes, we owe everything to God, but does God really expect us to hate out families? (It does happen but it is not God's wish.) What God is asking of us is to sit down and look at our lives.

The priority is to love God and thank him for all that we have, which is why we come to Mass together. To acknowledge that all we have has been given by him. As St. Ambrose said: "The rich man who gives to the poor does not bestow alms but pays a debt," for all we have is a shared gift from God.

So when we sometimes do get to the point where we now have achieved more, so I am now able to buy this or that (four Rolex watches?), that I can do so is all God's gift. I am sure that if he wanted to the footballer, Isak, who transferred to Liverpool for £127million, could buy the watches, (no doubt his agent too) but his ability to do so, comes from his skill which is God's gift.

So our discipleship begins with our realising and accepting this. I am loved by God and all I have is of God. So if God asks then I have to give.

When we are reflecting on what God is asking of us, to take up our cross, to endure whatever that demands of us, this is to follow God.

He will not ask more than we can do. He will not ask us to hurt others, especially those we love. Like the king and the builder, discipleship is also a question of sensible discernment, reflection. St. Francis could throw off his clothes in front of his father because he supported no one. No doubt his mother was upset, his father was certainly angry, but he was in a position to do this.

Following God is a radical way to live, but also (except for the rare saint) a rational one as well which we share with those we love. Today (tomorrow) the Church celebrates the canonisation of two seemingly ordinary young men. Pier Giorgio Frassati, who died at 25 and the teenager Carlo Acutis who died at 15. Frassati worked actively for the poor and was arrested demonstrating against Mussolini at one point. He said "charity is not enough we must have social change too." Carlo Acutis used the internet to spread the faith. Both lived lives of total devotion to God, often at odds with what their peers usually did, willing to let their love for God be seen in their lives and on the internet.

Lives of service to God where they used the gifts that God had given them to call others to God by their example and in ways their world, the eras they lived in, would understand.

This afternoon at 4.00 we are having a brief celebration of their lives as they are being canonised today (Sunday) and invite you to come along and share in this in the church.