

Commentary on Readings for Sunday, October 12, 2003
Dr. Emilio G. Chávez, J.D., S.T.D.,
Asst. Prof. of Sacred Scripture,
St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary

Wisdom and discernment is the topic of this Sunday's readings. Solomon prayed for wisdom, and found that every good thing came with it. The responsorial psalm is Moses' prayer for wisdom, acknowledging our fragility and the short number of years we have on earth (cf. Ps 39:5). But if wisdom is the "fear" of the Lord, and a treasure (see Isa 33:6), it is the Word of God which reveals to us both God's ways and our own innermost being, thus challenging us to respond sincerely, since in the end we will have to render an account of ourselves to God.

The rich "young" man in the Gospel had good intentions and sought eternal life, and claims to have followed the commandments since his youth (cf. Sir 33:3; 34:8). Jesus looks straight at this man with love and challenges him to heed his call to the Kingdom (cf. Matt 13:44-46). The man, however, is too attached to his earthly riches to discern that the will of God, wisdom and all good things besides are to be found in following Jesus.

Indeed, wealth is the greatest obstacle to entry into the Kingdom (one cannot love God and mammon, Matt 6:24; cf. 1 Tim 6:10). And so, even though this rich man sought the Lord in his youth, like Solomon (who in the end turned away from God, 1 Kgs 11), he has the dubious distinction of being the only person recorded in the Gospels to have refused Jesus' call (cf. Mark 5:18-19).