I did some backtracking this week and was captured by the following verse: “And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’” Luke 9:58

Why, I wondered, did God’s incarnate self walk the world in poverty? He is penniless. He doesn’t even have a denarius to illustrate his saying on paying taxes to Caesar, but has to borrow one. We call him “Lord,” but his life was in no way reminiscent of that august title. He was a pauper. We praise God for this profound reversal of our expectations. Yet, it is disturbing.

Every statement Jesus makes pertaining to God providing for us; our leaving everything for the sake of the ministry; our attachment to wealth and possessions, all of this and more is part of his life. The gospel story shows us that he asks nothing more of his disciples than what he endured as he went about preaching, teaching and healing.

His earthly ministry is in part a commentary on materialism and total dependence on a God who works through others. Could it be that the meals he shared with Pharisees were the only meals he had on those days? How easy it would have been to whip up a meal. Instead, he and his disciples pinched off kernels of grain as they walked through a wheat field.

In the wilderness, the devil dared him to turn a stone into a loaf of bread. Jesus responded by saying: “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” But one must live. One must have shelter.

Perhaps Jesus is asking that we not find ourselves so far removed from making God’s mercy a part of our lives that we become like the rich man who dined daily while Lazarus languished outside his door. We are called to do for the least because Jesus lived the life of the least.

Luke Timothy Johnson, writing in *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church,* notes “Luke’s complete avoidance of wealth and acquisition as the expression of God’s kingdom. There is here no prosperity gospel, no identification of fruitfulness with worldly success. The kingdom belongs to the poor and to those whose sharing of possessions with others includes them among the poor.”

Grace, peace and we will see you on Zoom this Thursday at 6 p.m. as we continue to explore the greatness of the Lord.

Fr. Dion and Patricia