

Daily Homily
Week Ten in Ordinary Time
[8 June 2020](#)

Inspired by Bishop Barron's virtual commencement address to the Class of 2020 (Google it!), this weekend I watched "A Man for All Seasons." It has been awhile, so it was good to return. This may have been the third time. It is an intelligent movie and really moving. A good movie for the mind, the heart, and the soul.

Bishop Barron referred to a scene at the beginning of the movie that I had not thought of in years. I actually used the scene in a funeral homily for a long-time, dedicated, Catholic high school teacher of English Literature. The scene is between Thomas More and a young protégé, Richard Rich. This young man was always trying to get on the inside track. He wanted to move up in the ranks quickly. He thought by hanging out with Thomas More he could gain, and even sidestep, a few rungs in the ladder. However, More could read him. He knew Rich wanted prestige, notoriety, titles, and honor. More was in his profession for truth, loyalty, the Catholic faith, and service. Rich, however, was not registering with that mentality at all. He wanted fine robes and sumptuous living. In the movie it is interesting to see how he progresses in appearance. He is shabby at first and inquisitive, curious, childlike even. In the end he is in regal attire and speaks arrogantly, pretentiously, and in knowing falsehood. His lies send Thomas More innocently to his execution. That, however, is not scene I want to speak about...

The scene that Bishop Barron refers to, that I wrote about in the funeral homily, is about More suggesting to his young friend, that instead of jumping into the demands of law, he should perhaps gain quality of character by becoming a teacher. Rich, in a disdainful sort of tone, inquires what good what that do? Who would know him? What impact would he have? Thomas More passionately says that Rich would grow, he would be known to his students, he would have an impact on young minds and young lives. And above all he would have the approval of God. More lays out before him what would be noble and worthy. Rich is not convinced, and he grows more disheartened toward the saintly man of Thomas More. Eventually, he even changes his allegiance.

Jesus and the Beatitudes. Can you imagine an individual like Richard Rich before Jesus? Can you imagine Jesus' disciples who are looking for a type of Messiah to bring an uprising, to overthrow the Roman government, to bring forth power, prestige to the people? Can you imagine those in our own day and age, maybe even parts of our own selves that wants notoriety, popularity, to be on the in-track? This is what Jesus tells Richard Rich, his disciples and us today: Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the hungry and thirsty, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted, and the insulted.

To look at these, we too, may respond with Rich... "Jesus, I'm not convinced."

Jesus is not concerned with climbing ladders. He is concerned with getting on the cross. Jesus is not concerned with "my will be done." He is concerned with "the Father's will be done." Jesus is not concerned with self-glorification. He is concerned with glorifying the Father in heaven. The Beatitudes are the way for this to happen. They are the advice for every young person. They are the commencement address for every graduating individual who is moving on to the next step. They are the way to know quality of character and to find the approval of God in this life and for the next.

At the end of the movie (spoiler alert – but you do know how Thomas More died, right? A martyr's death for sure.) the narrator addresses that all those who treated the innocent Thomas More poorly and with perilous plots died early, horrific deaths themselves. All except Richard Rich, he lived out his long life. He advanced to the top actually. However the narrator made it sound more like a prison sentence. It made me think, did Rich ever achieve real quality of character? It is only there that we can find peace and happiness and blessing with ourselves, with others, and with God.

So which "blessing" from the list of Beatitudes do you pray for today? Which "blessing" do you need in order to develop the quality of your character? Which "blessing" do you ask for – if you dare?