

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, August 4, 2019

Build Your Treasures In Heaven

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Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

Luke 12:13-21



So much of our life is spent working. Much of it can be a burden and a drudgery. What we earn is so quickly spent on gas, insurance, the mortgage, and all the other expenses of life. Any money we do manage to save gets eaten up by inflation or taxes. It can make us want to cry out with Qoheleth in this Sunday's first reading, "Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!"

Is there any meaning to our work? Is the little money we are able to earn and save worth the effort? Can money really give us the security and status we think it can?

Today's Gospel gives us some insight into these questions. Jesus tells the parable of a man who accumulates great wealth and thinks he is set for life. But there was something he had not considered. In fact, it turned out to be the most important thing — his immortal soul.

All of us want our families to be provided for when we die. We make sure we have life insurance to cover expenses and a will to ensure that all our belongings go to our loved ones. But have we taken the same care of our souls? Have we been so busy accumulating possessions on earth that we have neglected to build a treasure in heaven?

It is so easy to get lost in the monotony of life. We get up, go to work, come home, and then repeat the pattern day after day. When we have time to reflect, we wonder how the time has passed so quickly.

We see our children and society changing, and we wonder how it happened. In all the running around, we find that we have lost ourselves. The things we thought mattered — security, status, success — do not seem so valuable to us anymore when we consider what we gave up to achieve them.

The good news is that work and possessions are not all there is to life. Through faith, we believe that we are created for something greater — to love and serve God in this life and to enjoy eternal life with Him in the next. We are only passing through this world on a journey to our eternal homeland in heaven.

The stock market goes up and down. Companies are created and go out of business. We save money, and we spend it. All of these are sources of frustration for us. But they point to a reality that should fill us with hope and joy. As this world is passing away, the kingdom of God is growing among us.

If all our hope and effort are invested in this world, then we will be sorely disappointed. But if our hope is in God and his kingdom, then we will be blessed beyond measure. The challenge for us is to live in this world, working and making use of material things, while setting our sights on the kingdom of God.

PRAYER

Glorious Saint Joseph,
Model of all those who are devoted to labor,
obtain for me the grace to work in a spirit of penance
for the expiation of my many sins;
To work conscientiously,
putting the call of duty above my inclinations;
To work with gratitude and joy,
considering it an honor to employ and develop,
by means of labor, the gifts received from God;
To work with order, peace, moderation and patience,
Without ever recoiling before weariness and difficulties;
To work, above all, with purity of intention,
and with detachment from self,
having always death before my eyes
and the account which I must render of time lost,
of talents wasted, of good omitted,
of vain complacency in success,
so fatal to the work of God.
All for Jesus, all for Mary, all after your example,
O Patriarch Joseph.
Such shall be my watchword in life and in death.
Amen.

— *Prayer to St. Joseph the Worker*

What if we worked as hard at impressing others with the holiness of our lives as we do at impressing them with our homes, cars, and social status? What if we prayed as hard as we worked? Then we would be able to put up with the drudgery of life and find a meaning that would sustain us, whether we have plenty of money or none at all. We would store up a treasure for ourselves in heaven far from the reach of inflation and taxes.

And our lives would be marked by happiness and pleasure, rather than boredom and fatigue, because we would be living out the purpose for which we were created — to know, love, and serve our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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