



Bringing Home the Word

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
July 31, 2022

Becoming Rich in What Matters

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

What are we working for? What is the desire that moves us to sacrifice every day? Where is our heart? These are the deep questions pondered by the author of Ecclesiastes. He sees people around him struggling for years and then, as fate would have it, their wealth falls into the hands of someone who hasn't worked for it. He sees others, toiling and anxious, and wonders, "What does it really get them?"

Jesus also pointed out the vanity of making our life goal a struggle to

amass wealth, as if that was the source of security. To keep us from spiritual shortsightedness, he reminds us of an undeniable truth: we know neither the day nor the hour when we will be called before God to give an accounting of how we invested the talents he gave us.

We have been raised with Christ. Our greedy, miserly nature has been buried with Christ so that our generous, magnanimous, and farsighted nature could be set free. So if we believe in Christ, in the one who left all his heavenly treasures and became poor so that we might become rich, then the best investment is in him and his truths. He guarantees a return, even if it is deferred. He promises that what we surrender to him will be reimbursed a hundredfold and will give dividends for eternity.

So when examining where our treasure is, where our hearts and worries go, Jesus would have us ask ourselves: Will this make me richer in what matters to God?

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A Word from Pope Francis

Material goods are necessary—they are goods!—but they are a means to live honestly and in sharing with the neediest. Today, Jesus invites us to consider that wealth can enslave the heart and distract it from the true treasure which is in heaven.

Angelus, August 4, 2019



Sunday Readings

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21–23

For what profit comes to mortals from all the toil and anxiety of heart with which they toil under the sun?

Colossians 3:1–5, 9–11

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Luke 12:13–21

[Jesus said,] "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Would living a simpler life make my life better? How?
- Do "things" get in the way of my relationship with others?

Embracing the Tough Message

Kathleen M. Basi

When I was little and attended Mass, I dreaded the homily every week—and the Eucharistic Prayer, and usually the readings. In fact, I think I dreaded all of Mass except the songs. Because at least during those, I knew what I was doing—singing stirred my heart.

At some point, I realized that what sounded to me like the chatter of the adults in the *Charlie Brown* TV cartoons was actually supposed to mean something. I started trying to wrap my brain around all those words. Although most of it still zipped over my head, every week a word or a phrase would emerge from the gibberish and ping my conscience like divine sonar.

These days, I still struggle with distraction and preoccupation: forgotten tasks, lists in progress, my preschooler lying down on the front pew. My mother once told me, “There were a lot of Masses when you girls were little that we didn’t get much out of.” I understand now exactly what she meant.

Of course, the point of the liturgy is not what we “get out of it.” Christ is there whether we’re preoccupied or not, and grace touches us either way. But it’s worth the effort to refocus after each distraction. As with most things, we get out of liturgy what we put into it. If we make the effort to listen with an open heart, we almost always come away with a word that speaks to



a situation, relationship, or problem we’re facing.

That is the beauty of the Word: It’s not static, or dead, but rather living—Jesus, the Word of God “veiled in flesh.” Jesus is always speaking. He speaks through every breath of wind and every person we meet, and in particular, through liturgy. The question is whether we’re willing to face up to what it tells us about our lives, right here, right now. It’s easy to hear words meant for someone else. However, to embrace words that reach into the raw places of our soul and call us to change—that’s a harder Word to swallow.

Yet that is why we come to church. The liturgy is the spiritual food that sustains us for daily living. God won’t force himself on us. We have to be willing to be vulnerable. We have to listen with ears open to our own weakness. Most important, we have to be willing to change.

But if we muster the courage to respond to the Word when he calls, our lives—and by extension, our corner of the world—will be better for it.

***God won’t force himself on us.
We have to be willing
to be vulnerable.
We have to be willing
to change.***



***Generous God, while I am grateful
to have what is necessary
for my well-being... let me always
be intent on one thing:
listening and responding to your
presence in my life. Amen.***

—From *Celebrating the Gospels: A Guide for Parents and Teachers* by Gaynell Cronin

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 1–6

Monday, St. Alphonsus Liguori:
Jer 28:1–17 / Mt 14:13–21

Tuesday, Weekday: Jer 30:1–2, 12–15, 18–22 /
Mt 14:22–36

Wednesday, Weekday:
Jer 31:1–7 / Mt 15:21–28

Thursday, St. John Vianney:
Jer 31:31–34 / Mt 16:13–23

Friday, Weekday:
Nah 2:1, 3; 3:1–3, 6–7 / Mt 16:24–28

Saturday, The Transfiguration of the Lord:
Dn 7:9–10, 13–14 / 2 Pt 1:16–19 /
Lk 9:28b–36