

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

Quick Connect

What is the Gospel saying? Matthew 6:24-34 — Pg. 1

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What is God saying to you through this passage? Page 4

Gospel Reading – Matthew 6:24-34 – Daily Roman Missal

Jesus said to his disciples: “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.”

Spiritual Reading

Council of Vatican II Documents; The Church in the Modern World; Gaudium et Spes, 43

This council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation. Nor, on the contrary, are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age. Long since, the Prophets of the Old Testament fought vehemently against this scandal and even more so did Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament threaten it with grave punishments.

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[1] CCC 364

[2] Spiritual Reading, Council of Vatican II Documents; The Church in the Modern World; *Gaudium et Spes*, 43

[3] Catholic Answers; *The Essential Catholic Survival Guide*; page 361

[4] Catholic Answers; *The Essential Catholic Survival Guide*; page 364

[5] Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrangé; *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*

[6] Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrangé; *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*

[7] Matthew 5:14

Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation. Christians should rather rejoice that, following the example of Christ Who worked as an artisan, they are free to give proper exercise to all their earthly activities and to their humane, domestic, professional, social and technical enterprises by gathering them into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory.

Material vs. Spiritual - Lesson and Discussion

“Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

Life is more than food that we need to eat and the body is more than the clothing we put on it. “The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit.”[1] We have a human body because we have a spiritual soul, you cannot have one without the other. There is a significant purpose for our human lives because salvation is for the whole human person.

What is Materialism and why is it against the teachings of Christ and His Church? Materialism is the belief that matter is the only reality in the world. It explains every event in the universe as resulting from the conditions and activity of matter, which thus denies the existence of God and the soul. Materialism is against the teachings of Christ and His Church because they remove God from His creation and rob us of our human identity as human bodies animated by spiritual souls. When we focus on the material aspect of our lives, we face the temptation to “plunge ourselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from religious life.”[2]

How have people viewed matter throughout history? Throughout the history of the Church, there have been heresies that have veered to the extreme opposite of materialism. There is the heresy of Gnosticism (First and Second Centuries) that rejects the human body and claims that all matter is evil. “Gnostics denied the Incarnation, claiming that Christ only appeared to be man but his humanity was an illusion.”[3] Gnostics thought that if matter is evil, God cannot take on flesh – God could not be both fully divine (spiritual) and fully human (material). Another heresy that arose from the anti-material philosophy and theology was Iconoclasm (Seventh and Eighth Centuries). Iconoclasts believed since matter was evil, “it was sinful to make pictures and statues of Christ and the saints.”[4]

There should always be a healthy balance between the material and the spiritual. Material goods should not be worshiped (idolatry), seen as the only reality (materialism) or avoided and even hated (Gnosticism). For example, let's consider how people could view a beer. To an alcoholic,

the beer is more than matter; it can even become a god. To a puritan (a later form of Gnosticism), the beer is an evil to be avoided. Both the alcoholic and the puritan have a skewed view of the beer. To the Catholic, the beer is just a beer.

What is the greatest difference between material goods and spiritual goods? The reality of material goods is that they are temporal and thus have a limit. The reality of spiritual goods is that they are eternal and thus have no limit. The sharing of material goods is always an issue because matter is limited. There is conflict and greed in all types of societies from socialism (sharing wealth) to capitalism (creating wealth). The sharing of spiritual goods is unlimited. “The pressing need of devoting ourselves to the consideration of the one thing necessary is especially manifest in these days of general chaos and unrest, when so many men and nations, neglecting their true destiny, give themselves up entirely to acquiring earthly possessions, failing to realize how inferior these are to the everlasting riches of the spirit. And yet St. Augustine's saying is so clearly true, that 'material goods, unlike those of the spirit, cannot belong wholly and simultaneously to more than one person.' The same house, the same land, cannot belong completely to several people at once, nor the same territory to several nations. And herein lies the reason of that unhappy conflict of interests which arises from the feverish quest of these earthly possessions.”[5] The sharing of material goods will always mean the one sharing does not get as much as they could if they did not share. It always entails sacrifice. If we have a sandwich or a cake, the moment we share half or even a quarter of the sandwich, we immediately have less than what we started with. The whole sandwich cannot belong to our self and those we share with at the same time. Material goods go fast, in fact if you have too much of something, you might even begin to hate it. “On the other hand, as St. Augustine often reminds us, the same spiritual treasure can belong in its entirety to all men, and at the same time to each, without any disturbance of peace between them. Indeed, the more there are to enjoy them in common the more completely do we possess them. The same truth, the same virtue, the same God, can belong to us all in like manner, and yet none of us embarrasses his fellow-possessors. Such are the inexhaustible riches of the spirit that they can be the property of all and yet satisfy the desires of each. Indeed, only then do we possess a truth completely when we teach it to others, when we make others share our contemplation; only then do we truly love a virtue when we wish others to love it also; only then do we wholly love God when we desire to make Him loved by all. Give money away, or spend it, and it is no longer yours. But give God to others, and you possess Him more fully for yourself.”[6]

The inexhaustible riches of the spirit can be explained in the example of a fire. If we have a candle and a friend wants to share the flame, we only have to light their candle. In lighting their candle, our flame is not diminished in anyway but in fact the act of charity increased the light. This is why Saint Catherine of Siena says, “if you are the person you are meant to be you will set the whole world on fire” and Jesus says, “You are the light of the world.”[7]