

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

**2. Meditate** — 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** — 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** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.  
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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? Luke 12:13-21 — Pg. 1**

**What is the Church saying Past and Present? Pages 1-3**

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

## **Gospel Reading – Luke 12:13-21 – Roman Missal**

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.” He replied to him, “Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?” Then he said to the crowd, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.” Then he told them a parable. “There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, ‘What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?’ And he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, “Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’ Thus will it be for all who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God.”

## **Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time**

From the catechetical instructions by Saint John Mary Vianney, priest *The glorious duty of man: to pray and to love*  
My little children, reflect on these words: the Christian’s treasure is not on earth but in heaven. Our thoughts, then, ought to be directed to where our treasure is. This is the glorious duty of man: to pray and to love. If you pray and love, that is where a man’s happiness lies. Prayer is nothing else but union with God. When one has a heart that is pure and united with God, he is given a kind of serenity and sweetness that makes him ecstatic, a light that surrounds him with marvelous brightness. In this intimate union, God and the soul are fused together like two bits of wax that no one can ever pull apart. This union of God with a tiny creature is a lovely thing. It is a happiness beyond understanding. We had become unworthy to pray, but God in his goodness allowed us to speak with him. Our prayer is incense that gives him the greatest pleasure. My little children, your hearts are small, but prayer stretches them and makes them capable of loving God. Through prayer we receive a foretaste of heaven and something of paradise comes down upon us. Prayer never leaves us without sweetness. It is honey that flows into the soul and makes all things sweet. When we pray properly, sorrows disappear like snow before the sun. Prayer also makes time pass very quickly and with such great delight that one does not notice its length. Listen: Once when I was a purveyor in Bresse and most of my companions were ill, I had to make a long journey. I prayed to the good God, and, believe me, the time did not seem long. Some men immerse themselves as deeply in prayer as fish in water, because they give themselves

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totally to God. There is no division in their hearts. O, how I love these noble souls! Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Colette used to see our Lord and talk to him just as we talk to one another. How unlike them we are! How often we come to church with no idea of what to do or what to ask for. And yet, whenever we go to any human being, we know well enough why we go. And still worse, there are some who seem to speak to God like this: "I will only say a couple of things to you, and then I will be rid of you." I often think that when we come to adore the Lord, we would receive everything we ask for, if we would ask with living faith and with a pure heart.

### God Shaped Hole – Lesson and Discussion

*"are not rich in what matters to God."*

Many have heard the saying; there is a "God-shaped hole" in our hearts. Is this saying just an easy answer to a complex problem is it a "crutch". The readings this Sunday revolve around and dive deep into this simple saying.

**What does "God-shaped hole" mean?** It simply means that there is a place in our hearts that is empty, and God is the only who can fill it. It is like a missing puzzle piece right in the middle of a puzzle. You can try and find other ways to fill that missing spot, but only the right piece with the right image can finish the picture.

**Why is God the only one who can fill that spot in our hearts?** First, the responsorial psalm tells us, "God is the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!" If God is our rock of salvation then we must learn that the things of this world in the end don't nearly matter as much as God. The first readings talk about not allowing one's self fall prey to worrying to much about the things of this world: "All his days sorrow and grief are his occupation; even at night his mind is not at rest." Saint Paul in the second reading writes, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on things that are on earth." We pray "Oh, grant us endless length of days, in our true native land with Thee" in order to set our eyes on heaven, our end. Our fallen nature (concupiscence) desires the things of the world rather than God and seeks fulfillment here on earth rather than ultimate fulfillment in the beatific vision (heaven) which begins now. This is why the rule of Saint Benedict says, "to prefer nothing to the love of Christ" This is also why the world is one of our three enemies, the other two being Satan and the flesh. The world is "the false maxims of the world, and the society of those who love the vanities, riches, and pleasures of this world better than God." In the Gospel we see that the pursuit of wealth and worldly things to fill the heart, leads to depression and despair.

**What is depression?** The Modern Catholic Dictionary describes depression as "A term used by spiritual writers to describe a state of despondency during which a person feels inadequate, tends to withdraw from others, lacks response to normal stimulation, and is pessimistic about the future. Theologians of asceticism warn about giving in to moods of depression, which they describe as the characteristic temptation of those who strive after sanctity." If we allow ourselves to dwell in depression and not strive for heaven, it could lead us into sloth or even despair.

**What is Despair?** The Catechism's definition is simply, "The abandonment of hope in salvation and the forgiveness of sins." "It is therefore not mere anxiety

about the future or fear that one may be lost. It is rather a deliberate yielding to the idea that human nature cannot co-operate with God's grace, or that the despairing person is too wicked to be saved, or that God has cast one away. It is a grave crime against God's goodness." Those who do not seek God only have the things of this world to seek. When that is all they can seek they give into inappropriate desires and indulge in sinful behavior. Despair is not only a grave sin but is a sin against the Holy Spirit. **Why is the sin of despair so grave?** It is the belief that our human nature cannot co-operate with God's grace, that we are too wicked to be saved, or that God has cast us away. Remember God does not cast us away, we case our self away. All those who are in heaven are there because they choose to be there, many chose to stay in despair. **Why would we want to stay in despair?** We may choose to stay in despair because the alternative means we need to be active, zealous, deny self, pick up our cross, and follow Christ. To stay in despair is to be a coward. We must pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit called fortitude which will give us the courage to break out of the sin of despair.

**What is desire?** Desire is placed in every person, and can be a great tool in our belt. However, it can also be distorted and hurt us if not used properly. Desire is "to wish or long for the possession or enjoyment of something that a person's appetite does not presently have. Desires are natural if they proceed from man's inborn lack of what he needs; they are supernatural when inspired by divine grace. Man's fallen nature has desires that incline to what is sinful, but, so far from being sinful, these desires of concupiscence are a source of merit provided they are controlled according to the will of God."

**Why do we have a desire for things on earth?** We desire the things on earth for necessity and the things that are bad out of concupiscence. The things we naturally desire like food, water, shelter are basic needs that are natural and good because they help us sustain our lives. The deeper desires raise our intellect and separate us from animals. A desire to seek answers, truth, love, creation, etc. The desire for bad things can even be a good thing for us if we rise above them. God allows us to build merit when we say no to sinful desires for the greater natural desire.

**What is our basic natural desire?** The natural basic natural desire is for happiness or "Desire for Beatitude". **What is Desire for Beatitude?** "It is the basic inclination of humans to be perfectly happy. This desire is universal, for it is found in all people without exception, even in morbid or abnormal persons, though with some distortion. It is also unavoidable, for it lasts throughout life. It is finally irresistible because it insistently demands satisfaction. Ceaseless human unrest, shown in its constant activity, is an expression of this innate desire in varying forms. Theologians discuss whether this instinct for perfect happiness is a natural desire for heaven. The Church's explanation is that grace builds on nature, and therefore the human will inspired by grace can have a strong desire for heaven and the vision of God. But this is already the supernatural virtue of hope and not the longing of mere human nature."

Let us ask ourselves today "Where is my heart?" "Because we know that our destination is Heaven, we have to make positive and concrete acts of detachment with regard to what we own and what we use. How much do we share our goods with the needy? How much time and wealth do we contribute to apostolic works?"