

18th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

As human beings we must earn our living and work our passage through life.

So, we spend most of our life acquiring what we need for ourselves and for our family: food, clothes, shelter and so on.

Again, evidently any responsible person would want to make provision for the future. It is wise for a person to think ahead, so we make investments and we buy insurance policies, etc.

Yes it is good to earn our living but the problem is it is far too easy to be overly possessed by worldly riches or worried about our necessities of life and our future needs.

Today's gospel is about Jesus' teaching on not being overly possessed by worldly riches.

In the gospel someone asks Jesus to arbitrate in a family dispute over property/inheritance.

This request gives him the opportunity to teach them and all of us that "a man's life" does not consist in the abundance of his possession instead of being "rich in matters to God."

The fact is today we are being reminded to acknowledge God's goodness and love in our life. That is, in our attempt to work for our daily bread and our future needs we should not forget God who gifted us with life.

We should not leave God out of our plans completely. Whatever we do to provide for ourselves today and future should help us to grow in the goodness and love of God.

Our trust in the goodness and love of God will help us to make the most of what we are and value our lives.

Today's first reading is taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes. In this book a person who seems to identify himself as King Solomon seeks to find the meaning of life by applying wisdom and the search leads him to the brink of despondency.

He begins his book by writing "vanity of vanities says Qoheleth (the preacher) vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!" (Ecc. 1: 2)

He draws attention to the emptiness of all things of this world. And in the first reading he speaks about the lack of any true profit from human labor because of the inevitability of dying and leaving property.

"Here is one who has labored with wisdom and knowledge and skill, and yet to another who has not labored over it, he must leave property. This also is vanity and a great misfortune."

Though 'all is vanity' suggests his lack of hope/confidence in the future he admits in the book that joy in the fruit of one's labor is a gift from God. (Cf 2:24, 3: 13)

The point here is our knowledge and trust in God's Goodness and love will enable us to overcome the problems that lead us to become despondent so as to live as happily as possible in the present.

St Paul in the second reading tells us to revise our way of seeing life and doing things. According to him, because of our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, everything has taken on a new meaning. So, we must learn to see life and things in the light of our destiny of union with God.

Our life does not consist of possessions which we leave behind when we die. Our life consists of union with God which we will take along when we die.