My Beloved Ones,

This week’s Gospel reading comes Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount. In a chapter with so many beautiful teachings, to discuss all ten verses of this Sunday’s Reading could fill several books, so I will focus on one that is particularly meaningful, as well as beautiful.

After teaching the crowds the importance of guarding what proceeds into our eyes, and reminding us that it is impossible to serve both God and Money, our Lord continues: “...And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.” (Matthew 6:28-33) Our Father created everything that is beautiful on this earth; but, as the Lord says, even the beautiful flowers that He clothed will not remain.

In one of his letters, St. Jerome writes that a monk died, leaving “...a hundred pieces of money which he had earned by weaving linen... a council was held as to what should be done [with the money]... However... the rest of those called fathers, speaking by the Spirit, decided that they should be interred with their owner, with the words: ‘Thy money perish with thee.’” We should not mistake the temporary things of this world—whether we speak of nature and clothes, or food and drink—for the absolute reality.

Since the Fall of Man, the world has been an imperfect reflection of God’s Kingdom; and so, the challenge offered to us in this week’s Gospel asks us to consider what we value. Do we behave like the Rich Young Man of the Gospel who sadly leaves our Lord, because he is unwilling to give away all his possessions? Even if we cannot live an ascetic life, we can seek our Father’s Kingdom first, by giving generously from our heart to our Church. Even not speaking of our earthly treasures, we can also give of our time and talents by volunteering for our parish ministries, and with local Christian charities.

Our purpose on this earth is to act as true servants of God: living in this world, while looking toward the next. If we walk in the footsteps of our Lord’s Gospel, then our lives will be full of spiritual riches, and we will receive the strength and consolation needed to live on earth.

+ALEXIOS
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