

Our scripture readings are a challenge for us to slow down and to take a personal inventory of where we are on our spiritual journey. Life is about choices. Every day we make an array of decisions, but how does our faith give direction to those choices? There is a quote that rings true and gets to the heart of our scriptures today – “People were created to be loved; things were created to be used. The reason why the world is in chaos is because things are being loved and people are being used.” Today’s scripture reading are a challenge for us to stop and check our moral compass, to examine what our priorities are? To what is it that we strive?

- Is it wealth?
 - Is it power or position?
 - Is it our possessions?
- or
- Is it happiness?
 - Is it love, both loving and being loved?

In our gospel today, Jesus said “**Take care to guard against all greed.**” To fully understand what Jesus is talking about, it is important to look at the meaning of the word greed. The Gospel of St. Luke is written in Greek and the word **greed** found in today’s passage is a combination of two words **pleo** which means **more** and **nexia** which means **to want**. So what St. Luke is referring to with the use of the word “**pleonexia**” is **the condition of wanting more, of never being satisfied**.

The word **greed** in English carries a pretty negative connotation. When I hear the word **greedy**, I think of **crude selfishness or a thirst for possessions or wealth at the expense of others**. Now I doubt that any of us would be described as being greedy per se, but when we look at it with the context of not being satisfied or wanting more, it could more appropriately be used to describe most of us to various degrees.

As I was preparing for this homily, I came across an article about a blood disorder, a disease, called **pleonexia**, which causes the hemoglobin to retain oxygen, resulting in less than normal amounts of oxygen being distributed to the tissue of the body. When the body functions correctly, the blood receives oxygen, and distributes much of it throughout the body, keeping it nourished and healthy. With pleonexia, the blood receives oxygen like normal, but rather than distributing the oxygen throughout the body, it keeps too much of it for itself, depriving the body of needed oxygen. In a sense, the blood fails to realize that it is meant to share what it has with the body. It distributes some of its nutrients, but not enough, and it ends up keeping too much for itself, causing damage.

Now we are the Body of Christ here on earth. We are all connected and interwoven. When the Body of Christ is in balance, we share of our time, talents, and treasures so that no one is left behind. When the world is out of balance, greed takes root like a disease, resulting in social injustice -- poverty, war, violence, discrimination, and hatred. My friends, the world is out of balance. As a person of faith, we are called to bring balance and harmony to the Body of Christ, to this world, by finding balance within ourselves. The Eucharist is the medicine that helps cure “pleonexia” that infects that Body of Christ. As we come together as community to celebrate the Word of God and to be fed at this table, we find the strength to fight the desire to want more and more.

Everything you and I have comes from God. Life is a gift that is meant to be shared. When Jesus warned us to guard against greed, he was challenging us to live life to the fullest by opening ourselves up to the world in which we live, sharing ourselves with all we meet as we journey through life. When we let go of our need to have more, when we are satisfied with

the gifts we have, our compass points us in the right direction. But when we see the glass as half empty, when we spend our days wanting more, we lose our way. There is nothing wrong with having nice things, there is nothing wrong with experiencing pleasure, but when we let the desire for wealth or pleasure control us, when we let the desire to not share of our time or to hoard our treasures, it controls us. When that happens, we are out of balance and the Body of Christ suffers.

My friends, I encourage you to join me this week by taking time to reflect on where we find ourselves in life, to adjust our compass. Spend a few moments in prayer everyday and ask yourself:

- Am I on the right road?
- Am I adequately sharing of my time, talents, and treasures to help build up the Body of Christ?
- Am I living the life to which I am called?

I pray that the Holy Spirit fills your hearts and minds this week with the fullness of joy that comes when our internal compass points us directly to the heart of Christ.