

Parish Priest's Corner

In God We Trust

My dear friends in Christ,

You may have heard me ask this question a thousand times: "What would you say is nonnegotiable in your life?" What is the purpose of life? Certainly, it is not about accumulating possessions. Today's first reading takes a closer look at what could be considered vanity in human life. One example of this vanity is all the toil people put into acquiring wealth, only to have to leave it all to their heirs. Come to think about it, the things that are supposed to satisfy the human heart all too often do not satisfy it. Only faith in God and the hope of seeing God face to face (the afterlife) can provide a light in the darkness.

The Gospel reading today calls our attention to the difficulties that possessions can cause for the disciple of Jesus. Notice that Jesus refuses to get involved in a family dispute. Instead, he focuses on the cause of the dispute – greed for possessions. It is important for us to remember that Jesus did not condemn having possessions, rather, he emphasizes that placing possessions first in our lives and idolizing material things draw us away from God who is the source, author, and fountain of life. The parable in today's gospel stresses the foolishness of depending on material things for one's security rather than on God. As human beings, we naturally have cravings for security. In biblical times, when famine was a recurrent threat, they sought security by stockpiling grain. In our times, we seek it by stockpiling money/possessions. We accumulate things and cling to them because they give the illusion of security. But security cannot be found in possessions. It can be found only in God.

In his search for security and happiness in this life, the man in the parable forgot the source of all happiness, God himself. He forgot eternal life and his obligation to the poor. He is considered a 'fool' not because of his wealth but because he has not known how to use wisely the wealth which he had.

We can use our possessions wisely by first giving constant thanks to God through whom we have received the strength, acumen, and capacity to acquire all that we have. When we do so, we place God first, and he becomes the nonnegotiable in our lives. It is not a coincidence that "In God we Trust" is emboldened on our dollar bills. Secondly, we need to ask ourselves: What in my life am I attached to? Is it money, food, articles of clothing, another human being, political party? It is not possessions that are sinful but possessiveness. Final, how can I use the resources God has blessed me with in such a way that it benefits another human being?

May the light of Christ always shine in our hearts, and by listening to Him may we know how to use all we've been given wisely and generously.

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