

PLAYING WITH THE STARS

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, July 30-31, 2016, Luke 12:13-21

By Deacon Ernie A. Abadejos

BOB HOPE, YOU MAY REMEMBER HIM, WAS AMAZINGLY GENEROUS WHEN IT CAME TO GOOD CAUSES. OVER THE YEARS HE SPENT HIS FORTUNE TO HELP THE HANDICAP, FUND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, ENTERTAIN OUR TROOPS HERE AND ABROAD. HE KNEW HOW TO READ YOUR HEART. HE SAID: "If you don't have charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart disease."

THE PROSPEROUS FARMER IN THE PARABLE SUFFERS FROM THAT SAME KIND OF HEART DISEASE. HE PONDERES HIS CIRCUMSTANCES AND PLANS HIS FUTURE. REPEATEDLY, HE SPEAKS IN 1ST PERSONAL PRONOUNS SUCH AS "*my grain*," "*my goods*," "*my harvest*." THIS MAN HAD A REAL PROBLEM. HE ASKED HIMSELF, "*What shall I do for I do not have space to store my harvest?*" HIS BARN WERE ALREADY FULL AND A BUMPER CROP WAS WAITING IN THE FIELD. NOT ONLY HE HAD MORE THAN WHAT HE NEEDED; HE HAS MORE THAN HE COULD STORE. THE ONLY SOLUTION HE COULD COME UP WAS TO BUILD A BIGGER STOREHOUSE WITHOUT EVEN CONSIDERING THAT HE COULD GIVE AWAY OR SHARE HIS BUMPER CROP WITH HIS TENANTS. HE WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT PROBLEMS OF OTHERS BUT HIS OWN. HE WAS NOT PROUD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OTHERS BUT HIS OWN. HE WAS NOT AWARE OF THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS BUT HIS OWN. HOW FOOLISH CAN A MAN GET? AND JESUS CALLED HIM A RICH FOOL NOT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE DID BUT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE DID NOT DO. "One's life," JESUS SAID, "does not consist of possessions." LIFE IS NOT HAVING THE MOST TOYS AT THE END. LIFE, INSTEAD, IS BEING ABLE TO GIVE THINGS AWAY; TO BECOME LIGHTER, NOT HEAVIER OVER TIME.

AT SOME POINT IN OUR LIFE, WE ARE ALL GOING TO BE RICH FOOLS LIKE HIM BECAUSE NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE ALREADY HAVE, WE WILL ALWAYS BE AWARE OF WHAT WE DON'T HAVE. THIS LONGING TO HAVE MORE, TO FEEL MORE SECURE IN LIFE CAN CAUSE US TO LOSE THE REAL PURPOSE OF OUR LIFE; TO LOSE THE REAL MEANING OF LIFE; TO LOSE SIGHT OF OUR TRUE WEALTH---AND THAT IS TO BE ABLE TO FILL OUR HEART WITH GRATITUDE TO GOD. THINK OF THIS LITTLE GIRL CONFINED TO BED BECAUSE OF A SEVERE SPINAL DEFORMITY. HER BED WAS POSITIONED SO THAT SHE HAD A CLEAR VIEW OF THE SKY. SHE WANTED IT THAT WAY SO SHE COULD SEE THE STARS. ONE DAY WHEN HER PRIEST CAME TO VISIT, SHE SAID, "I like to play with the stars. I wake up a lot at night and can't go back to sleep and that's when I play with the stars." HER PRIEST CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT SHE MEANT BY THAT, ASKED, "How do you play with the stars?" THE CHILD ANSWERED, "I pick out one and say, that's Jesus. I see another and I say, that's Mommy. And another, that's Daddy. And I just keep on naming the stars after people and things I am thankful for---my guardian angel, my brothers, my sisters, my doctor, my grandparents, my friends, my dolls, my dog, my bed. AND ON AND ON SHE WENT, UNTIL AT LAST SHE EXCLAIMED, "But here are just not

enough stars to go around.” HAVE YOU EVER FELT THAT WAY ABOUT GOD AND OF THE MANY BLESSINGS HE HAS SHOWERED UPON YOU?

THE PROSPEROUS FARMER THOUGHT OF SUCCESS ONLY IN TERMS OF HIS MATERIAL POSSESSIONS. HE COUNTS HIS BLESSINGS WITH WHAT HIS MONEY CAN BUY: to eat heartily, to drink well, relax, and to enjoy life. NEVER IT OCCURS TO HIM THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS MONEY CANNOT BUY---clear conscience, genuine affection, INWARD SPIRITUAL STRENGTH. “Success,” A WISE MAN SAID, “is to laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics, and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to see the best in others; to know even that one life has breathed easier because you lived.”

THE PROSPEROUS FARMER, IN TODAY’S PARABLE, WAS IN CONVERSATION WITH HIMSELF ABOUT HIMSELF---to ponder his circumstances and plan his future. WE ALL DO THE SAME. BUT WHAT JESUS IS TELLING US IS THAT WHEN WE TALK TO OURSELVES ABOUT OURSELVES, INCLUDE GOD AND WHAT MATTERS TO GOD---to be humble, to be prayerful, to be generous. THEN AND ONLY THEM LIKE THAT LITTLE CHILD, WE MAY FIND OURSELVES PLAYING WITH THE STARS.