

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time_C

August 3, 2025

St. Edward's Parish

“Take care! Be on guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” In many places Our Lord warns about the danger of attachment to possessions: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal.” (Mt 6:19); “You cannot serve God and money” (Mt 6:24); “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Mt 16:26).

Our Lord tell us to be on guard against “all kinds of greed” in the Gospel today, and we could perhaps see in this the pursuit of, not only possessions, but also all passing things such as pleasures, achievements, honours etc... It is not that these things are bad in themselves, but we tend to pursue them in a disordered way and lose sight of the true purpose of our lives. Consider how much of our lives we dedicate to the pursuit of these things: making money, seeking pleasure, being successful, enjoying ourselves etc... Consider how much we encourage our children to pursue these things. Yet we learn from experience that they all pass away and cannot ultimately fulfill the purpose of our lives.

The first reading is from the Book of Ecclesiastes. This book is a meditation on the reality that everything in this world passes away. The author identifies himself as King Solomon, the richest and wisest person in the history of Israel. He sets out to examine the pursuit of such things as pleasure, knowledge, accomplishments, and possessions, and he comes to the painful conclusion that they all pass away. The refrain throughout the book is, “This also is vanity.” It means all these things are empty. They pass away like a breath or vapour; here for a moment and then gone. Ecclesiastes expresses the common experience for all of us, namely, even the best things in life pass away. The best meal is enjoyed for a moment then gone, the best new car wears down, the possessions we work for must be left behind, even our loved ones pass away.

The experience that everything passes away can bring a sense of sorrow; however, it can also open us toward a great mystery. If we look into ourselves, we find that *imprinted on our heart*

is a desire for fulfilment. Every one of us has a yearning to find something that will ultimately satisfy us and make us happy. Our constant experience, however, is that whatever we find in this world passes while that unquenchable longing for lasting happiness remains. This experience can open us up to the great conviction that a lasting happiness must exist, but not in this world. C.S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* put this very simply saying, “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” The experience that possessions, pleasures, and the things of this world all pass away and leave us unsatisfied points out that our hearts were made for something that is eternal, namely, God.

Let us return now to the Gospel. Our Lord says, “Be on guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions”. What then does our life consist in? The purpose of our life is nothing less than to be united to God beginning in this life and continuing throughout eternity (CCC 1). This takes place through knowing loving and serving Him and loving our neighbour as ourselves. It is the one thing that will never pass away. The things of this life, possessions, pleasures, achievements, honours etc... all find purpose and meaning when they are used to help us love God and our neighbour and help us on the way to eternal life. If we pursue these things in such a way that they lead us away from God, then they leave us only cold and empty.

The great tragedy in the Gospel today is that this man approaches Jesus about his family inheritance. He has Jesus, God in human flesh, right in front of Him, the one who can satisfy the deepest longing of this man’s heart; however, instead of following Jesus he is fixated upon some possessions that will never last and never ultimately satisfy him. Let us pray today that everything we pursue in this life will be done in such a way that it leads us closer to God and we may never be led astray by the things of this world.