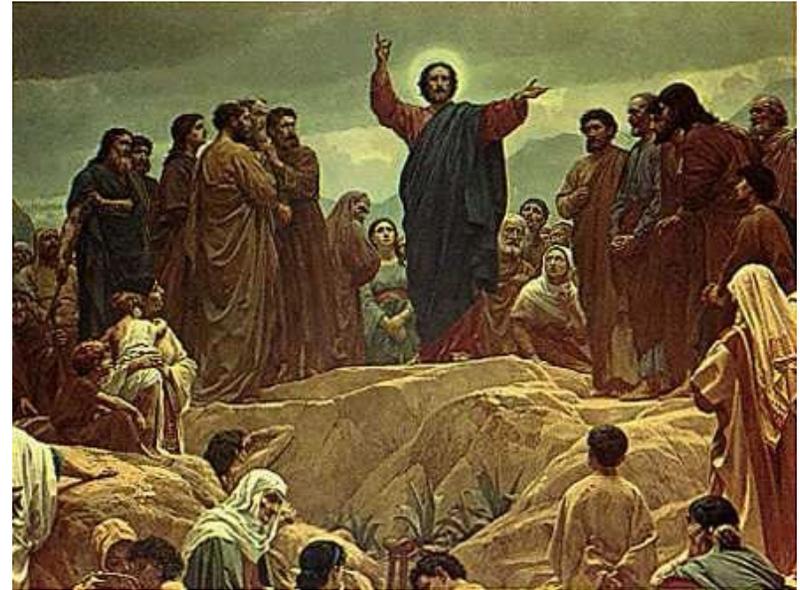


Link to Liturgy



8th Sunday of Ordinary Time Material and Spiritual Goods

Link to Liturgy provides faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life. Sign up Free to Link to Liturgy.



Lessons and Discussions

Page 5 – What do we Seek?

“All these things pagans seek.”

Page 8 – The Attractiveness of Worldly Goods

“No one can serve two masters”

Page 14 – Material vs. Spiritual

“Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

Entrance Antiphon (Psalm 18:19-20) – Daily Roman Missal

Should be chanted three times so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

*Factus est Dominus**Ps 18 (17): 19, 20*

I
T HE Lord has become my protector; * he has brought
 me forth in-to free and open spaces; he de-li-vered me
 because he was well pleased with me.

Source: <http://www.cwatershed.org>

Alternate options:Hymns

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
 Faith of Our Fathers
 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
 O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Praise Songs

Better is One Day (Matt Redman)
 All in All (Dennis Jernigan)
 Amazing Love (Billy James Foote)
 Take my Life (Chris Tomlin)

Remnant

Big Gulp
 Limitless

Collect – Daily Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
 Amen

“The End” Notes

- [1] Fr. John Hardon, S.J., *Modern Catholic Dictionary*; page 399
- [2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* – 2113
- [3] Saint Jeanne Jugan, foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor
- [4] Matthew 5:3
- [5] Matthew 6:21
- [6] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D; *Divine Intimacy*; Section 383
- [7] Mark 6:31, 34
- [8] John 6:68
- [9] Moral Reflections on Job by Saint Gregory the Great – Office of Readings (8th Sunday of Ordinary Time)
- [10] Matthew 22:37
- [11] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D; *Divine Intimacy*; Section 287.2
- [12] The Order of the Mass I; Communion Rite
- [13] Fr. Leonard Goffine; *The Church’s Year*; page 407
- [14] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [15] *Catechism of the Catholic Church Glossary* – page 871
- [16] Rite of Baptism; Roman Rite
- [17] 1 John 2:16
- [18] Gospel Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [19] John 10:10
- [20] *Catechism of the Catholic Church Glossary* – page 894
- [21] *Catechism of the Catholic Church Glossary* – page 889
- [22] *Catechism of the Catholic Church Glossary* – page 870
- [23] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B.; *The Liturgical Year*; Vol. 11, page 338
- [24] Saint John Bosco; Paul Thigpen; *A Dictionary of Quotes from the Saints*
- [25] Venerable Pope John Paul II the Great; *Veritatis Splendor*; 63.2
- [26] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B.; *The Liturgical Year*; Vol. 11, page 341
- [27] CCC 364
- [28] Spiritual Reading, Council of Vatican II Documents; *The Church in the Modern World; Gaudium et Spes*, 43
- [29] *Catholic Answers; The Essential Catholic Survival Guide*; page 361
- [30] *Catholic Answers; The Essential Catholic Survival Guide*; page 364
- [31] Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange; *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*
- [32] Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange; *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*
- [33] Matthew 5:14
- [34] Luke 15:13-14
- [35] Luke 8:43
- [36] Luke 5: 3-5
- [37] Luke 5:9
- [38] Luke 5:20
- [39] Luke 5:17
- [40] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Volume Three, 28.1
- [41] Mark 8:36
- [42] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B.; *The Liturgical Year*; Vol. 11, page 340

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that the course of our world
may be directed by your peaceful rule
and that your Church may rejoice,
untroubled in her devotion.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – Matthew 6:24-34 – Daily Roman Missal

NOTE: *In the Roman Catholic Tridentine Lectionary this Gospel
14th Sunday after Pentecost*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus said to his disciples: “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading

Council of Vatican II Documents; The Church in the Modern World; *Gaudium et Spes*, 43

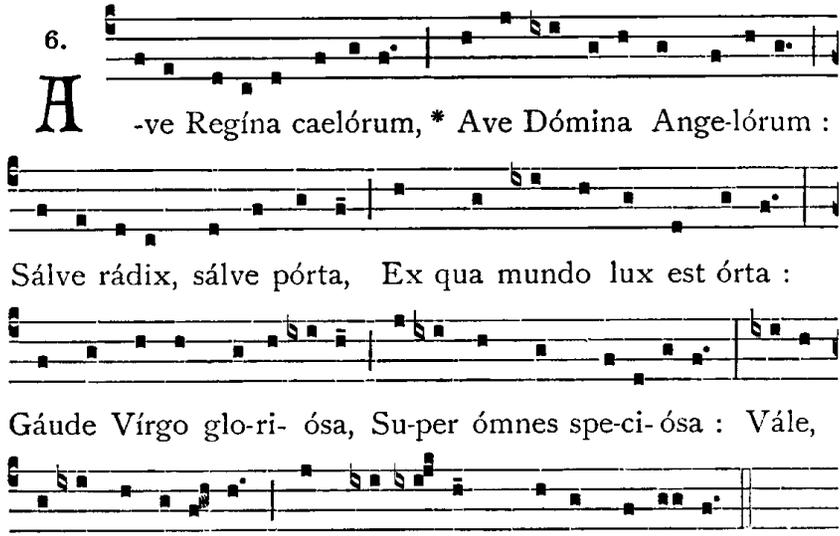
This council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation. Nor, on the contrary, are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age. Long since, the Prophets of the Old Testament fought vehemently against this scandal and even more so did Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament threaten it with grave punishments. Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation. Christians should rather rejoice that, following the example of Christ Who worked as an artisan, they are free to give proper exercise to all their earthly activities and to their humane, domestic, professional, social and technical enterprises by gathering them into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory.

Responsory – Office of Readings (Hebrews 13:21; 2 Maccabees 1:4)

May God give you all the goodness you need to do his will;
- may he accomplish in you all that is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ

Marian Antiphon – Divine Office (Sunday Compline) – Ave Regina Caelorum

6.



A -ve Regína caelórum, * Ave Dómina Ange-lórum :

Sálve rádix, sálve pórtá, Ex qua mundo lux est órta :

Gáude Vírgo glo-ri- ósa, Su-per ómnes spe-ci- ósa : Vále,

o valde decó-ra, Et pro nó-bis Chrístum exó-ra.

V. Dignare me laudare te Virgo sacrata.
R. Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.

English Translation

Hail, Queen of Heaven; hail, Mistress of the Angels; hail, root of Jesse; hail, the gate through which the Light rose over the earth.

Rejoice, Virgin most renowned and of unsurpassed beauty.
Farewell, Lady most comely. Prevail upon Christ to pity us.

V. Let me praise thee, most holy Virgin.
R. Give me strength against thine enemies.

Let us pray. Grant, O merciful God, defense to our weakness; that we who now celebrate the memory of the holy Mother of God may, by the aid of her intercession, rise again from our sins. Amen

Cast from me every evil
that stands in the way of my seeing you,
hearing, tasting, savoring, and touching you;
fearing and being mindful of you;
knowing, trusting, loving, and possessing you;
being conscious of your presence

and, as far as may be, enjoying you.
This is what I ask for myself
and earnestly desire from you. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Oratory: Place of Prayer – Remember Christian Soul

To purchase the Oratory: Place of Prayer Book - <http://remnantband.bandcamp.com/merc>

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Remember, Christian soul, that thou hast this day, and every
day of thy life:

God to glorify,
Jesus to imitate,
The Angels and Saint to invoke,
A soul to save,
A body to mortify,
Sin to expiate,
Virtues to acquire,
Hell to avoid,
Heaven to gain,
Eternity to prepare for,
Time to profit by,
Neighbors to edify,
The world to despise,
Devils to combat,
Passions to subdue,
Death perhaps to suffer,
And judgment to undergo.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

May he open you heart to his law and his precepts.
- may he accomplish in you all that is pleasing to him, through
Jesus Christ

What do we seek? – Lesson and Discussion

“All these things pagans seek”

In general, a pagan is defined as one who practices idolatry. It is a term used to identify a person who does not believe in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth.[1] In today’s Gospel, Jesus says that the pagan seeks three things. What are we to eat? What are we to drink? What are we to wear?

Where do we hear these questions asked and answered in our culture?

These seem to be the questions asked we ask when we go out with friends or family. We ask, “What are we going to do? Where are we going to eat?” For many, the most important question is “What am I going to wear? How will I look?” These questions are fine and necessary if we do not dwell on them, but they can become a problem on two levels. First, it can be a problem if we are asking these questions out of fear. For example, if we are asking these questions, “Will I eat? Will I drink? Will I have clothes?” It shows that we do not have trust in our Heavenly Father. The pagan, a person who does not have faith, might ask these questions because they do not know their Heavenly Father and they must rely solely on themselves. Secondly, this can become a problem if we are asking these questions and only these questions. We are not to be concerned only about the material needs, but we should be concerned with much more important questions. For example, before going out on a date or with friends, the Christian might ask more questions rather than just what they will eat, drink, and wear.

What are some deeper questions that a Christian should ask before going out?

Will I be led into temptation tonight? Will I be put in a situation where I might sin, a near occasion of sin? Is this leading to God or away from Him? How can I imitate Christ, be a witness for Christ? How can I be an example with my thoughts, words, and actions? Life for the Christian is much more than the basic human desires for food, clothing, and entertainment. The Christian’s concern does not end with the body, but extends to the condition of their soul and the souls of those they will interact with and influence. The Christian looks for the activity of the Holy Spirit in every moment, they look for

the acts according to the providence of God's holy will. **Do we care more about the meal we are eating, rather than the soul of the person we are eating with? Do we pray before we eat? Do we care more about what we are wearing and how our body looks, rather than the state of our soul?**

TV AD - Test Your Awareness: Do The Test – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:0

Do the material things in our life make us less aware of the spiritual things?

Before eating, we should take a moment to pray and thank God for blessing us with a meal. The simple prayer that most Catholics pray is “Bless us O Lord, in these thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.”

TV AD - “Coors light ad” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:30

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYZwlG4q0->
Marvin doesn't care about the two people in front of him; he does not care about conversation but only about picking up the girl. In a society that seeks the material rather than the spiritual, it becomes evident that we use people as objects. Since we make people into objects, we can easily disregard them and dispose of them.

If a pagan is a person that commits idolatry, is it possible for a Christian to practice idolatry? As Christians, we might believe that we cannot fall into idolatry. However, the moment we “honor and revere a creature in place of God,” we have committed idolatry. “Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, Satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. Jesus says, ‘You cannot serve God and mammon.’ (Matthew 6:24) Many martyrs died not adoring ‘the Beast’ (Revelation 13-14) refusing even to simulate such worship. Idolatry rejects the unique Lordship of God; it is therefore incompatible with communion with God. (Galatians 5:20; Ephesians 5:5).”[2]

In our quest to focus on material goods rather than spiritual things, we not only begin to like material goods, but we may start to honor, revere and even feel that we need these things

uncommon in our own time? In any case, perhaps the heavy material price paid for that man's freedom, (the complete destruction of a valuable herd of two thousand pigs drowned in the sea of Galilee), can give some faint indication of the high price needed to ransom the whole of contemporary pagan man. It was a cost that could be measured in the case of the Gerasenes by the amount of wealth they had lost. Now it is a ransom whose price is the lived poverty of the one who generously seeks to redeem him. The real poverty of Christians is perhaps the price God has fixed as the ransom that can liberate the men of our time. It is indeed a price worth paying...; a single man is worth immeasurably more than two thousand pigs. He is worth more than all the riches and marvels of the created world.”[40] A pig today can cost around \$100, this means the herd of 2000 swine would have cost almost a quarter of a million dollars. **Think of what a quarter of a million dollars could buy. Would you rather have \$250,000 or the liberation of a person who has been a burden to you and is in the grasp of the devil? Is \$250,000 worth more than a soul?** Jesus tells us that we can “gain the whole world yet lose our soul.”[41] Material goods brought about a hardness of heart, rather than conversion for the Gerasenes.

Perhaps, the most famous example of how material goods led to a hardness of heart is that of Judas. “Let us not be astonished at our Gospel declaring that God and mammon are irreconcilable enemies; for, who was it but mammon that had our Lord Jesus sacrificed on its hateful altar, for thirty pieces of silver?”[42]

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Prayer for Detachment

From Blessed Peter Faber, SJ

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

I beg of you, my Lord,
to remove anything which separates
me from you, and you from me.

Remove anything that makes me unworthy
of your sight, your control, your reprehension;
of your speech and conversation,
of your benevolence and love.

twelve years” and “had spent her whole livelihood on doctors and was unable to be cured by anyone.”[35] Many times we spend all our energies on trying to be cured, be happy, or be successful. We may go to all sorts of people, but no one is able to help us. When the woman realized that all her money is spent and that no doctor can help her, it was in desperation that she turned to Jesus. **When is a time when others have failed us and in desperation, we turned to Jesus?**

What are examples of when material goods have led to hardness of heart and even sin? In the fifth chapter of Mark, Jesus heals a man who “had been dwelling among the tombs, and not one could restrain him, even with a chain. In fact, he had frequently been bound with shackles and chains, but the chains had been pulled apart by him and the shackles smashed, and not one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the hillsides he was always crying out and bruising himself with stones.”[36] This poor man, who was a burden to himself and to his community, was possessed by more than one demon. When Jesus asked his name, the man replied, “Legion is my name. There are many of us.”[37] Jesus drove the demons out of the man and into a herd of swine, which ran off a cliff and drowned. Although the swine died, the man was liberated. The man was changed; he became a new person. He was seen by the people, “sitting there, clothed and in his right mind.” Later the man even pleaded to remain with Jesus as his disciple. Instead, he was told to “proclaim in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him; and all were amazed.”[38] What a victory! This man had been possessed with thousands of demons, thus he was a danger to himself and others, and a disgrace to his community. He is now clean, calm, in his right mind and preaching the Gospel. Imagine how the people of his community must have felt. The people of his community came to Jesus and “begged him to leave their district.”[39] **Why were the people mad at Jesus and asked him to leave when such a great victory was won?**

“Saint Mark makes the point that about two thousand pigs were drowned. It must have meant a very considerable loss to those Gentiles. Perhaps it can be considered as the ransom demanded of this people in order to free one of their number from the power of the devil...They lost some pigs but they recovered a man. And this possessed man, this man who was rebellious and divided against himself, held under the wretched domination of a host of unclean spirits, is he not perhaps a figure of men not

more than God. Desires of the flesh, such as power and pleasure, can even become idols for us. We are also not allowed to worship the things that give us power and pleasure; for example, the state, family, and money. “It is so good to be poor, to have nothing, to depend on God for everything.”[3] In these words of Saint Jeanne Jugan, we are reminded of the beatitude, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”[4] The worship of God does not promise us power, pleasure, or money. It does promise us the kingdom of heaven. The prize of the kingdom of heaven is beholding – being in communion with the King of that kingdom, Jesus Christ. “For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”[5] **Is the prize of the kingdom of heaven a treasure for us? What can we do in our life to see Jesus, to see heaven as a prize?**

In order to keep Jesus in the center of our lives and heaven as our prize, all we need to do is look to the Cross. “He presents Himself to us under an appearance so human, so loving, so welcoming, stretching out His arms on the Cross to invite all to come to Him, showing us the wound in His side as the symbol of His Love. Far from trying to escape His dominion, we should beseech Him to be the sole Ruler of our mind and heart, and the complete master of our will.” [6] Hang a Cross somewhere in your room where you will see it throughout the day and whenever you look at Jesus, remember the great gift that He gave us and choose to live for Him!

So what should we seek? There is a famous phrase based on the journey of the magi, “All wise men seek God.” Seeking God is a sign of humility, a sign that we are “poor in spirit” and need God. The ultimate sign of wisdom is not that we have all the answers, but that we know that we do not have the answers. In humility, we turn to God and confess our great need to Him. Saint Augustine spent 33 years of his life seeking truth and finally his seeking led him to God. This seeking is summed up with his famous quote; “Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they find rest in you.” Just as electrons seek and are drawn to the core of an atom, we are drawn to our true core our nucleus – God.

There are many accounts in the Gospel of how people flocked to Jesus. Many times, Jesus and the apostles did not even have time to eat, but Jesus always had pity on the crowds and made time for them. “People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat...when Jesus

disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them.”[7] Jesus was a poor man, he had nothing, but yet people sought Him. When Saint Peter was introduced to Jesus, he knew that he had found what he was seeking. He would later say to Jesus, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”[8] Saint Peter, Saint Augustine, countless disciples and we, today, finally find who we are looking for in Jesus Christ.

MUSIC - U2 + Gospel Choir - I still haven't found what I'm looking for - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:27

<http://youtu.be/M8Wt3dhF4f>

Bono writes of everything he has done both good and bad. He realizes that even though he’s tried lots of things it is not what satisfies him. It is only realizing it was Christ who carried the cross and carried everyone’s shame that Bono began to see what he was looking for.

The Attractiveness of Earthly Goods - Lesson and Discussion

“No one can serve two masters”

“The sinner indeed walks the face of the earth in two directions: externally, his actions seem to be holy, but inwardly his thoughts are worldly.”[9] We cannot trick God. We might be doing everything correctly on the outside by going through the holy actions, while on the inside we are still worldly in our thoughts, desires, and imaginations. Complete surrender of one’s self means living out the greatest commandment to “love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”[10] Christ says that this is the first and greatest commandment. If we truly live this out, our actions will declare to all that we are not pagan, that we do not worship the creature or created things, but instead worship the Creator of all.

“The Gospel again puts us on our guard against the attractiveness of earthly goods. First it affirms that no man can simultaneously serve two masters, God and Mammon, any more than one can follow the two roads at the same time: the one leading to the kingdom of God and the other to worldly pleasure. Anyone giving himself to God must have the courage to give himself entirely, with no regrets, no backward glance – however fleeting – at the things of the world. The soul who, after choosing the path of perfection, does not go forth generously, with its whole heart, will never be contented. It will neither experience

Material goods go fast, in fact if you have too much of something, you might even begin to hate it.

“On the other hand, as St. Augustine often reminds us, the same spiritual treasure can belong in its entirety to all men, and at the same time to each, without any disturbance of peace between them. Indeed, the more there are to enjoy them in common the more completely do we possess them. The same truth, the same virtue, the same God, can belong to us all in like manner, and yet none of us embarrasses his fellow-possessors. Such are the inexhaustible riches of the spirit that they can be the property of all and yet satisfy the desires of each. Indeed, only then do we possess a truth completely when we teach it to others, when we make others share our contemplation; only then do we truly love a virtue when we wish others to love it also; only then do we wholly love God when we desire to make Him loved by all. Give money away, or spend it, and it is no longer yours. But give God to others, and you possess Him more fully for yourself.”[32]

The inexhaustible riches of the spirit can be explained in the example of a fire. If we have a candle and a friend wants to share the flame, we only have to light their candle. In lighting their candle, our flame is not diminished in anyway but in fact the act of charity increased the light. This is why Saint Catherine of Siena says, “if you are the person you are meant to be you will set the whole world on fire” and Jesus says, “You are the light of the world.”[33]

We see in the Gospel, two responses to material goods, conversion and hardness of heart.

What are examples of when material goods lead to

conversion? The prodigal son and the woman with hemorrhaging both have a conversion when they have exhausted all material means. The Prodigal Son is given his inheritance, and he “squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need.”[34] It is when he found himself in need (poor in spirit) that he returned home to his father’s house. Many times it is only when we are in need, when we have spent it all, that we return back to God, our Heavenly Father. **When is a time when we have run out of material things to satisfy us and so we turn to God?** The woman with a hemorrhage was “afflicted with hemorrhages for

marriage? Each wedding what is remembered is not remembered because of love and sacrifice, but rather, for what everyone is wearing, the location and even the uniqueness of the wedding. At the end of the clip, she mentions she does not need anything, that she is Jesus. This statement is the perfect example of the sin of pride. She does not need God, the opposite of the beatitude “poor in spirit,” someone who knows they need God. An over emphasis on material goods and the abundance of these goods can lead to the thought that we do not need the spiritual and even worst, that there is no spiritual reality.

What is the greatest difference between material goods and spiritual goods? The reality of material goods is that they are temporal and thus have a limit. The reality of spiritual goods is that they are eternal and thus have no limit. The sharing of material goods is always an issue because matter is limited. There is conflict and greed in all types of societies from socialism (sharing wealth) to capitalism (creating wealth). The sharing of spiritual goods is unlimited.

“The pressing need of devoting ourselves to the consideration of the one thing necessary is especially manifest in these days of general chaos and unrest, when so many men and nations, neglecting their true destiny, give themselves up entirely to acquiring earthly possessions, failing to realize how inferior these are to the everlasting riches of the spirit. And yet St. Augustine's saying is so clearly true, that 'material goods, unlike those of the spirit, cannot belong wholly and simultaneously to more than one person.' The same house, the same land, cannot belong completely to several people at once, nor the same territory to several nations. And herein lies the reason of that unhappy conflict of interests which arises from the feverish quest of these earthly possessions.”[31]

The sharing of material goods will always mean the one sharing does not get as much as they could if they did not share. It always entails sacrifice. If we have a sandwich or a cake, the moment we share half or even a quarter of the sandwich, we immediately have less than what we started with. The whole sandwich cannot belong to our self and those we share with at the same time.

MOVIE - Brewster's Millions - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 2:38

<http://youtu.be/FosFEzsLKl>

the joy of knowing that it belongs entirely to God, nor will it have the satisfaction of being able to follow all the attractions of the world; the first will be impeded by the soul's unfaithfulness, the second by the fear of God which it still possesses. Such a soul is unhappy, torn between the two and in continual struggle with itself. But what keeps it from seeking the kingdom of God with its whole heart? Jesus gives us the answer in today's Gospel; too much solicitude [care, concern or anxiety] about material things, about ease and security in this present life.”[11] If a soul is too concerned or anxious about material things they will not focus on the state of their soul. During the Eucharistic Prayer, at Mass we pray to be “safe from all distress.” “Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”[12] Padre Pio said, “Pray, Hope and don't worry.” Being free from sin and safe from all distress go together. It is sin, especially in the attachment to worldly things, which causes us much of the anxiety that we experience.

Who are the two masters whom we cannot serve alike? God and Mammon. Mammon is the Syrian term for riches, and in the Middle Ages, Mammon was commonly regarded as a deity. Thus we see that those who serve Mammon, serve their desire for riches and all the other goods and pleasures of the world. We cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time because each commands lifestyles that are diametrically opposed to each other. For example, in Psalm 51:17 we hear “A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” If we serve God, we must humble ourselves before Him. To serve mammon, instead of humbling ourselves, is a choice to raise our base desires to a place of prominence in our lives. We cannot serve both, one requires us to sacrifice our desires and the other requires us to sacrifice everything for our desires.

“God prohibits usury, theft, deceit, etc.; while on the other hand, to which the desire for wealth impels us. God commands that we keep holy Sundays and holy days, and devote them to His service; the desire for riches tempts man to omit religious worship and to seek temporal gain; it disturbs him even in church, so that he is only present with his body, but absent in mind with his temporal goods and business.”[13]

[See also Video Homily - God, Mammon and the Salvation of

our Souls]

<http://youtu.be/FTtKydu20x>

When is a time that you have been present in body at Mass but absent in mind?

Why can't we live for the world and for God? We cannot walk two paths at once. This is the where we see contradiction so many times in the Christian life. A person rejects sin and worldly things while at Church, youth group, etc., but then rejects Christ and the Church while they are engaged in the other activities of their life. We cannot be on two roads at the same time. So we choose one road while in certain places and around certain people then we choose another road while at other places and around other people. **Why is this a bad thing?** Our Christian life then becomes based on where we are and who we are around and is in fact not following God but rather the dictates of people and places. This will only bring about continual struggle, as a person won't let themselves fully love or be loved by God and at the same time will not fully embrace the good of the world because they are semi committed to God and would feel guilty to fully indulge. When we begin drifting in and out of following our faith, it can be harder to find our way back on the way of Christ. It can also be easier to fall prey to the Devil. This split between faith and life is a serious sin and is scandalous to non-Christians. "This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age." [14]

Why is it easy, perhaps easier, to seek the things of the body rather than the soul? Why is it easier to seek the material rather than the spiritual?

We have what is called concupiscence. Concupiscence refers to the "human appetites or desires, which remain disordered due to the temporal consequences of original sin." [15] The correct order is to "seek first the kingdom of God." Concupiscence causes us instead to seek first the disordered pleasures of the flesh. Due to original sin, humans are drawn toward whatever the imagination portrays as pleasant and away from whatever it portrays as painful. However, that is not enough because spiritual life demands sacrifice and even pain. We witness the tremendous sacrifice and unthinkable pain in the Crucifixion of Christ and in the deaths suffered by the martyrs. Contrary to that sacrifice, our concupiscence causes us to move away from the call of the gospel and instead embrace the "false promises" [16] and

Christ and His Church? Materialism is the belief that matter is the only reality in the world. It explains every event in the universe as resulting from the conditions and activity of matter, which thus denies the existence of God and the soul.

Materialism is against the teachings of Christ and His Church because they remove God from His creation and rob us of our human identity as human bodies animated by spiritual souls. When we focus on the material aspect of our lives, we face the temptation to "plunge ourselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from religious life." [28]

How have people viewed matter throughout history?

Throughout the history of the Church, there have been heresies that have veered to the extreme opposite of materialism. There is the heresy of Gnosticism (First and Second Centuries) that rejects the human body and claims that all matter is evil. "Gnostics denied the Incarnation, claiming that Christ only appeared to be man but his humanity was an illusion." [29] Gnostics thought that if matter is evil, God cannot take on flesh – God could not be both fully divine (spiritual) and fully human (material). Another heresy that arose from the anti-material philosophy and theology was Iconoclasm (Seventh and Eighth Centuries). Iconoclasts believed since matter was evil, "it was sinful to make pictures and statues of Christ and the saints." [30]

There should always be a healthy balance between the material and the spiritual. Material goods should not be worshiped (idolatry), seen as the only reality (materialism) or avoided and even hated (Gnosticism). For example, let's consider how people could view a beer. To an alcoholic, the beer is more than matter; it can even become a god. To a puritan (a later form of Gnosticism), the beer is an evil to be avoided. Both the alcoholic and the puritan have a skewed view of the beer. To the Catholic, the beer is just a beer.

MOVIE - 27 Dresses Scene - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 4:37

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_O9oIhYQx

Holy Matrimony, one of the Sacraments and one of the most important institutions in our society is a perfect example of how the material often trumps the spiritual. How often, as in this movie, do the glamour, riches and material appearances cover up the spiritual and most important virtues of a wedding and

Land, they made the mistake of continuing to remember and even dwell on the food and experiences they had while they were slaves. Just so, God has led the Christian out of sin and leads us to the promised land of heaven, yet we remember the sins of our past, even if only in our imagination, from when we were in the slavery of sin. The Christian, like the prodigal son, is no longer a slave, but rather a son. Let us behold our dignity as a son and live as a son, rather than dwell on our past as a slave to self and to sin.

What is the result of living just for our self, our will and our desires?

MOVIE - "Click" The saddest scene - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:44

http://youtu.be/2_MIrzUc6-

In this movie Adam Sandler gets total control over his life. This control leads to pursuit of all pleasures, work and everything he thought he wanted. In the pursuit of his will and pleasures, he neglects his family. This final scene shows his regret and the word to his son, it shows the lesson that he learned, “Family comes, first”. He is willing to sacrifice his life, to share this lesson with his son so that his son does not fall into the same mistakes. In our popular culture, movies like *Click* sometimes side with virtue and family values over materialism and selfishness. These movies, however, rarely go far enough. Rarely do they transcend beyond the surface to where virtue and value comes from – from God. If credit is not given to God, even family, good works and virtue can become a god in and of themselves and we fall into idolatry.

Material vs. Spiritual - Lesson and Discussion

“Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

Life is more than food that we need to eat and the body is more than the clothing we put on it. “The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit.”[27] We have a human body because we have a spiritual soul, you cannot have one without the other. There is a significant purpose for our human lives because salvation is for the whole human person.

What is Materialism and why is it against the teachings of

pleasures offered by the world.

TV – 60 Minutes – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 13:5

Staff Sgt. Giunta is the first living soldier to receive the Medal of Honor (the highest medal given to a soldier) since the Vietnam War. The report tells of his bravery on the battlefield. The story recalls his complete willingness to sacrifice himself for his friend in the face of certain death. The sacrifice is the greatest witness of a person willing to give up material goods, even the good of life, for a greater good.

Saint John narrows concupiscence down to three main areas: of the flesh (what we do), the eyes (what we want or desire), and the pride of life (our will over God’s will). “For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world.”[17]

[See also Link to Liturgy Packet – The Temptation of Christ

Jesus tells us to “look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”[18] Our heavenly Father knows our needs. Do we trust our Father? When we fall into the concupiscence of flesh, eyes and pride of life, we are accepting things that are not from our heavenly Father but rather from the world. These offerings of the world are the very “false promises” that we rejected at our baptism which claimed us as a child of the Father.

MOVIE – Grown Ups (Bug Zapper) - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:41

http://youtu.be/Xf_j-iNi9C

The false promises of the world are similar to a bug zapper, they are attractive, seem warm and have a bright light but only lead to destruction and death. Jesus tells us, very clearly, what Satan’s goal is, “A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy.”[19]

How can we battle the threefold concupiscence (flesh, eyes and pride of life)? The Church has given to us the weapon of the evangelical counsels to counter this threefold concupiscence. The evangelical counsels are also called vows. These are taken by religious, but should be practiced by all Christians because they were lived by Jesus.

What are the Evangelical Counsels, the three vows that

religious take? The vows are poverty (a detachment from worldly things[20]), obedience (submission to the authority of God[21]) and chastity (Temperance which leads to the unity of the body and soul[22]). These three vows are symbolized in many orders by a rope worn around the waist and by the three knots on the end of the rope hanging down from the waist.

VIDEO – Franciscan Friars of the Renewal - POP CULTURE CONNECTION

4:00 (start at beginning and stop at 4:00)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPokzf9FjI>

The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, who began their work in the Bronx, NY say they are committed to no money (poverty), no honey (chastity) and a boss (obedience). They lead lives with no bling bling (poverty), no sweet thing (chastity) and service to Christ the King (obedience). Poverty is the weapon we use in the battle against concupiscence of the eyes. Our fallen desire is to have so much, to have more rather than be more; poverty removes the 'so much' from our lives and allows us to focus on God more. As one of the priests said, "spiritual poverty is not so much about giving up things, but about giving up one's self." Obedience is the weapon we use to battle the concupiscence of pride of life. where we choose to do our will and assert our will rather than completely abandon our self to the will of God. Chastity is the weapon we use to battle the concupiscence of the flesh. If we live only for sensual pleasure the soul becomes the servant to the body. With chastity there is unity of body and soul in which the body animates the soul, is at the service of the soul.

"The Gospel [Matthew 6:24-34] which has just been read to us is the condemnation of the concupiscence of the eyes – that is, attachment to the goods of this world which, of themselves, are good but in name and appearance." [23] In today's culture, images and many worldly things are constantly bombarding our eyes. Those who can appeal to our eyes, have access to our affections, our money, our time, and our desires. "Guard your eyes, since they are the windows through which sin enters the soul." [24] Sin does not enter us only through our eyes, but what we allow to enter through our eyes affects our whole person, both the body and the soul. "Jesus alludes to the danger of the conscience being deformed when he warns: 'The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if you eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the

darkness!' (Mt. 6:22-23)" [25] In what ways can we become desensitized to sin through our eyes? An example of this is how media has become very sensual and violent over the years. It has been said that if you put a frog in boiling water, it will jump out. If, on the other hand, you put the frog in lukewarm water and slowly turn up the water to the point of boiling, the frog will happily stay in the water even though it means its death.

Are the evangelical counsels, the three vows, only for the religious? How can lay people live out these vows each day?

The evangelical counsels are not only for the religious since "communion with God is possible in every state of life. There must be one condition observed, and that is, the soul must be detached from every tie that could keep her from going to God. The religious breaks these ties by his three vows, which are in direct opposition to the triple concupiscence of fallen nature; the layman, who, though he is living in the world, desires to be what his Creator would have him be, must, without the aid of real separation which the religious makes, be quite as completely detached from his own will, and sensuality, and riches, in order that all his intentions and aspirations may be fixed on the eternal home, where his one infinite, loved treasure is." [26]

What are the ties that we have that keep us from going to God?

Detachment from worldly goods is not merely physically. The poor man can still have many attachments to his desires, such as what he would like to have or what he has in his dreams. We must have complete detachment from the things of this world. If we are to embrace Jesus, we must first let go of all that we are holding on to, which includes that which we hold on to with our imagination. In his book, *Memory and Identity*, Venerable Pope John Paul II the Great, says that our identity is based much on our memories, our past. Our memories and experiences of the past can be sinful, and thus hurtful. We must have healing and forgiveness of the past as well as not continue to dwell on the past by recalling sin through our imagination. Many times, although we are forgiven and absolved of sin, in the Sacrament of Confession, we still recall past sins, almost as to relive them.

Blessed Junipero Serra, the founder of many missions and cities on the West coast, had a simple motto. "Always go forward, never look back." This was a motto that the Israelites could have benefitted from when they were in the desert. When God has saved them from slavery and was leading them to the Promised