**Homily for the 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time [C] (Aug -3-2025)**

**Readings :- Eccl 1:2; 2:21-23; Col 3:1-5, 9-11; Lk 12:13-21**

**My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ**;

The common theme of today’s readings is the futility of the greedy acquisition of wealth and power because everything and everyone is *“here today and gone tomorrow.* “For the meaning of life cannot be found in selfishly hoarding wealth and possessions, but only in sharing these with the needy.

***“Generous people are rarely mentally ill.”*** Dr. Carl Menninger, the world-renowned psychiatrist, was talking on one occasion to an unhappy but wealthy patient. He asked the patient what he was going to do with so much money. The patient replied, *“Just worry about it, I suppose.”* Menninger asked, *“Well, do you get that much pleasure from worrying about it?” “No,”* responded the patient, *“but I get terrified when I think of giving some of it to somebody else.”* Then Dr. Menninger went on to say something quite profound. He said, *“Generous people are rarely mentally ill.”* (David A. Renwick, <http://www.2preslex.org/S020217.htm>.) — I didn’t say that. Dr. Carl Menninger said it. *“Generous people are rarely mentally ill.”*He is right. People who cannot share with others have deep-seated problems. If your level of giving to the work of God and the service of others requires no sacrifice, then you have Jesus locked in a cupboard, and he is not really living in every part of your life. In today’s Gospel Jesus’ parable, God calls such people “fools.”

**Important teachings from the Scripture readings of the day** :- The first reading, taken from Ecclesiastes, reminds us that the greedy acquisition and hording of material wealth is useless because when the hoarder dies, he goes to eternity empty-handed, and his heir gains, and perhaps squanders, his riches. In the Responsorial Psalm (Ps 90), the Psalmist challenges us to listen to God and allow Him to soften our hearts that we may share our blessings with others. The Psalm Response urges, **“*If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts”****(Ps 95:8).*In the second reading, Paul directs our attention to lasting, Heavenly treasures and warns that greed (*pleonexia*) for wealth and influence is idolatry. He advises, *“Put* *to death, your parts that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and* *the greed that is idolatry” (Col 3:5).* In today’s Gospel, Jesus, telling the parable of the foolish rich man, warns us against all types of greed, because greed takes our life’s focus away from God and away from serving and loving Him in Himself and in other people. Jesus says that God calls the greedy rich man a fool because the man thought he would not die soon and that he was not accountable for the way he used his riches. Besides, the rich man forgot the fact that his wealth had been lent to him by God for sharing with the needy. Jesus also warns us that*our eternal life does not consist of earthly possessions (Lk 12:15),*which we should share to gain eternal life.

 **Important messages for personal reflection and life:** **1) we are invited** to share our blessings with others. The parable of the rich fool gives us a warning as well as an invitation. It reminds us that our possessions are merely lent to us by God, and that we are accountable for their use. We must be generous in sharing our time, our treasure, and our talents in Christian stewardship. Even if we are poor financially, we may be blessed with intelligence, good will, a sense of humour, or the ability to console, encourage, inspire, support, and help others. God expects us to live out our spoken thanks to Him for all these blessings by sharing them with others for His glory. The Old Testament Scriptures are clear about tithing – giving 10% of our income for God’s cause and for helping the needy. Not limiting the gift to a tenth, Paul, writing to the Corinthians in regard to a Church-wide collection for the poor in Jerusalem, declares, “*Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7).* In any case, experience has shown us that God can never be outdone in generosity**! 2) Let us control our greed**. Our greed takes different shapes and forms. For some, it may be the desire for the approval and praise of others. For others, it is the uncontrolled desire for power, control, or fame. For still others, greed takes the form of excessive and sinful indulgence in eating, drinking, gambling, drugs, or sexual activities. Greed also turns our life away from God and away from loving and serving Him in Himself and in other people. As greed directs all our energy and attention to fulfilling the self, its objects become our false gods, and they will consume us, unless we curb them, pay attention to those in need around us and, thus, become rich in the sight of God.

**Gospel exegesis:**  **The greed behind a property dispute:** The Jewish rabbis were often asked to settle disputes among their countrymen. They judged cases using the Mosaic Law as given in the Torah — the Jewish book of civil, religious, and liturgical laws.   In matters concerning the distribution of property in a family with two children, the Torah (Dt 21:15-17, Nm 27:1-11, 36:7-9), granted two-thirds of the wealth to the elder son and one-third to the younger. If there were several sons, the first-born would receive double the inheritance of his younger brothers and would serve as the patriarch of the family and executor of his father’s estate.  In the case related in today’s Gospel, either the older brother had delayed the partition of property, or the younger brother was greedy. Jesus refused to be an arbitrator in this property dispute between two brothers because he had come to bring people to God by preaching the Good News of God’s forgiving and sharing love.  But he used the occasion as a “teachable moment,” instructing the audience on the folly of greed and selfishness, while contradicting the Epicurean motto: *“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”*

**Why did Jesus say God called the rich man a fool?** Traditional Jewish good works included prayer, fasting, and alms-giving. Blessed with an excellent harvest, the rich landowner in Jesus’ parable did the opposite of giving alms. Instead of thanking God and sharing with the hungry, he planned to give himself over to a pagan orgy – *“eat, drink and be merry.”* Jesus said God called him a fool because:

**1) He forgot God and failed to become “*rich in what matters to God.*”** He forgot the truth that God was the real owner of all his possessions and blessings, and he was only God’s steward or manager. Instead, he was focused on himself and was selfish to the core. He liberally used the “aggressively possessive” pronouns *“I”* (six times) and *“my”* (five times). He was possessed by his possessions, instead of possessing them. In the process, he evicted God from his heart and never thought to thank God for having blessed him with a rich harvest. He was not thankful to God for His blessings; instead, he considered them as solely the fruit of his own labor. He also failed in his stewardship duties – the returning to God of His portion in paying his tithe. He did not recognize his possessions as on loan from God, given to him to share with others.  He was taken up with worries or anxieties about his wealth.  He was starving to death spiritually in the midst of God’s abundance.   Yet, though he may have prayed the beautiful prayer in the book of Proverbs: “*Give me neither poverty nor riches but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.”* (Prv 30:8-9), he did not change.

**2) He forgot others in need:**As God had been ousted from his heart, that heart became narrow and constricted with no space left for others in it.  He also forgot that God had given him everything he had – the land, the good growing season and the excellent harvest – not for himself alone but for all those around him who were in need. Hence, the rich man gave no thought to the poor workers who had laboured in his field, nor to his poor relatives, nor to the poor people in his community. In doing this, he turned his back on his Jewish heritage, for the Torah demands that gleanings from a harvest be left for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the immigrant (Lv 19:9-10; 23:22; Dt 24:21). The rich man in the parable did not care about others who were suffering. He did not show any regard for the hurting and needy. He did not voice any concern for keeping the community of which he was a part safe from unexpected droughts, famines, or plagues. The richer the man grew, the greedier he became, as suggested by the Roman proverb: “*Money is like sea water; the more a man drinks the thirstier he becomes.”*The rich man was called a fool because he did not consider sharing his wealth. In other words, he left other people out of his possessions. St. Gregory the Great taught that when we care for the needs of the poor, we are giving them what is theirs, not ours. We are not just performing works of mercy; we are paying a debt of justice. Life does not consist in possessions but in sharing what we possess with others. The goods of the earth have been given to everyone.

**3) He forgot that he was going to die and never saw beyond this world.**  He forgot that he was going to die, sooner or later. It was as he was planning to build new barns and warehouses to store his wealth that he heard the words all creatures will hear one day from their Creator: “*This night your life will be demanded of you!”*He left his soul out of his thoughts and, hence, left eternity out of his plans. This, as Jesus warns us in the parable, is folly.

**JOKES OF THE WEEK**:-**1)  Lawyer’s greed and doctor’s greed:** A doctor and a lawyer were attending a cocktail party when the doctor was approached by a man who asked advice on how to handle his ulcer. The doctor mumbled some medical advice, then turned to the lawyer and remarked, *“I never know how to handle the situation when I’m asked for medical advice during a social function. Is it acceptable to send a bill for such advice?”* The lawyer replied that it was certainly acceptable to do so. The next day, the doctor sent the ulcer-stricken man a bill. The lawyer also sent a bill to the doctor.

**2) The greedy man and the genie.** A man is walking down the beach and comes across an old bottle. He picks it up, pulls out the cork and out pops a genie! The genie says, *“Thank you for freeing me from the bottle. In return I will grant you three wishes. ”*The man says *“Great! I always dreamed of this and I know exactly what I want. First, I want one billion dollars in a Swiss bank account. ”*Poof! There is a flash of light and a piece of paper with account numbers appears in his hand! He continues, *“Next, I want a brand-new red Ferrari right here. ”*Poof! There is a flash of light and a bright red, brand-new Ferrari appears right next to him! He continues, *“Finally, I want to be irresistible to women.”*Poof! There is a flash of light and he turns into a *box of chocolates*.

**Additional Anecdotes:1) Sad fate of nine richest and most powerful men:** Legend has it that in 1923, a meeting of America’s most powerful men took place at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago.  Attending the meeting were the following nine financiers and power brokers: the president of America’s largest steel company, the president of America’s largest utility company, the president of America’s largest gas company, the president of the New York Stock Exchange, the president of the Bank of International Settlements, the nation’s greatest wheat speculator, the nation’s greatest bear and speculator on Wall Street, the head of the world’s greatest monopoly, a member of President Harding’s cabinet. It was said to have been both a celebration of their success as well as an opportunity to plan their future exploits and dominance.  These were the captains of their respective industries and some of the most successful businessmen of the era.

But how did things turn out for these distinguished gentlemen?  Within 25 years, all of these great men had met a horrific end to their careers or their lives: The president of the largest steel company, Charles Schwab, died a bankrupt man; the president of the largest utility company, Samuel Insull, died penniless; the president of the largest gas company, Howard Hobson, suffered a mental breakdown, ending up in an insane asylum; the president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, had just been released from prison; the bank president, Leon Fraser, had taken his own life; the wheat speculator, Arthur Cutten, died penniless; the head of the world’s greatest monopoly, Ivar Krueger the “match king”, also had taken his life; and the member of President Harding’s cabinet, Albert Fall, had just been given a pardon from prison so that he could die at home. The seventh Jessie Livermore, the eighth Ivor Krueger and the ninth Leon Fraser, all committed suicide. As for the Wall Street Bear, Jesse Lauriston Livermore, famous speculator in the stock and commodities markets, his end is perhaps the most tragic of all.  A week after Thanksgiving in 1940, Jesse walked into the Sherry-Netherland Hotel in New York, had two drinks at the bar while scribbling something in his notebook, then proceeded to the cloak room where he sat on a stool and shot himself in the head.  He was 62 and left behind $5 million, down from the $100 million fortune he had amassed just ten years earlier. Here is a striking proof of what Jesus tells us in today’s gospel: a man who was rich wanted to be richer, but the Lord called him “fool” and called him from this life before he could enjoy his riches. (Msgr. Arthur Tonne).

**02)Silver glasses**: : Henry Ford once asked an associate about his life goals. The man replied that his goal was to make a million dollars. A few days later Ford gave the man a pair of glasses made out of two silver dollar coins. He told the man to put them on and asked what he could see. “Nothing,” the man said. *“The dollars are in the way.”*— Ford told him that he wanted to teach him a lesson: If his only goal was dollars, he would miss a host of greater opportunities. He should invest himself in serving others not simply in making money. That’s a great secret of life that far too few people discover. Money is important. No question about that. But money is only a means by which we reach higher goals – loving service to others, loving obedience to God.

**03)  *Candle in the Wind and Lighthouse in the Storm:****The wedding of*Princess Diana (Lady Diana Spencer), in 1981, was watched by 750 million people. She died in an accident at 36 on August 31, 1997. Her funeral in 1997 was viewed by 2.5 billion people. At her funeral, singer Elton John brought tears to the eyes of hundreds of mourners in Westminster Abbey when he sang: “Candle in the Wind.” Interestingly, this song – with the line “*Goodbye, Norma Rose*” – was originally written for an equally glamorous woman, Norma Jeanne, who assumed the stage name ‘Marilyn Monroe’ and died at 36 on August 5, 1962, due to an overdose of sleeping pills.    Diana and Marilyn share many things in common – both were beautiful and wealthy, photographed by paparazzi worldwide, yet, unhappy in marriage or relationships, and both died tragically in August at a young age – young icons snuffed out like candles in the wind. Ecclesiastes gives bad news to those who base their hopes on the perishable wealth and goods of this world, offering us a stark message: *vanity of vanities, all is vanity!* All of human life is ultimately meaningless if viewed in itself, apart from God. Five days after Princess Diana died there was another “going home,” this one for Mother Teresa (canonized as St. Teresa of Calcutta) who died at 87 on September 7, 1997. She was a “wise woman,” spending her whole life sharing Christ’s selfless, caring, agape love with the down-trodden in the streets of Calcutta.  God blessed her sharing love by increasing her 12-member Missionaries of Charity congregation to 3000 serving the poor and the discarded in 100 countries. (Watch Mother Teresa’s simple funeral:    (*Francis Gonsalves in Sunday Seeds for Daily Deeds).*

**4: Needs and wants:**In an effort to lead her young charges on an exploration of their values, a second-grade teacher gave the following assignment to her class. Take a large piece of poster paper or cardboard and draw a line down the center. On the left side of the paper, write “Needs”; on the right side, put “Wants”. Then, either draw or cut pictures out of old magazines, which illustrate your ***needs* and *wants***. A few days later, when the assignment was due, the classroom was filled with colourful and candid reminders of the materialistic matrix within which Christianity is challenged to make an impact. Little fingers and small hands had cut out images of video game systems, giant-screen colour televisions, ten-speed bicycles, as well as ice-cream sundaes, cookies and a large assortment of candies. Unfortunately, many of these pictures were posted on the side of the poster labelled, “Needs”! Obviously, the teacher had her work cut out for her! — To distinguish needs from wants, and then to discern true needs from false and frivolous ones, is no easy task; it is, in fact, a lifelong process which requires continued evaluation. Had the same assignment been given to a classroom of adolescents or to a group of adults, would the results have been different? Or would the pictures simply have reflected the tastes and appetites of older people for sports cars, designer and name brand clothing, speed boats, luxurious homes, and the lifestyles of the rich and famous. Would the more mature person also have skewed the line between needs and wants? Questions such as these are put before the gathered assembly today as the selected readings prompt a careful consideration of the integrity and authenticity of personal and communal values. (Sanchez Files)