18th Ordinary Sunday C

“If you were raised with Christ seek what is above, set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” These are the words of St. Paul in the second reading of today. Things of this world last only a short period of time and they cannot satisfy the deep longings of human heart. There is an eternal longing for true happiness in every human person. We try to satisfy that longing using material things. We think we find that happiness in wealth, riches, alcohol or drugs. We falsely think that if we have a better car or a better house or a better spouse or more money or material things we would be happy. But sadly these things cannot satisfy our longing. Longing for happiness is an eternal longing and it can be satisfied only by something eternal. There is only one thing that is eternal. That is God. So only he can fully satisfy the longings of human heart. Things of this world cannot because they are ephemeral. They are not eternal. God alone is eternal. That is why Jesus called the rich man of today’s gospel “you fool.” He was foolishly searching to fulfill the longings of his heart in material things.

Through the parable of the rich man Jesus teaches us about the true worth of things in the light of eternity. He teaches us that pursuit of wealth and worldly well beings is foolishness. Authentic happiness does not come from worldly goods. Jesus tells us in the gospel, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, a man’s life does not consist of possessions.” The rich man in the gospel had a bountiful harvest. So he said to himself, “I shall tear down my barn and build larger ones. I will have goods stored up for many years. Then rest, eat, drink and make merry.” In his ruminations he never thought of thanking God for the abundant harvest. God was overlooked and He never entered his thoughts. He laid up ample goods for many years. But in his life there is no reference to God and much less to other people. He sees no need to give some of his goods back to God in gratitude. God is the giver of all gifts. The man in the gospel sees no need to share his blessings with others who are less fortunate.

Worldly goods are only means for us to attain our goal which is eternal life. True happiness is found there. Today most people have made the means their goal. As a result the real goal of life is lost. Therefore there is so much disorientation, frustration, unhappiness and meaninglessness in life. Try to reset holiness or eternal life as your goal in life and you will see frustrations and unhappiness vanishing and will find your life becoming more and more meaningful. Therefore, it is important to remind ourselves constantly of our goal in life – eternal life. Meditating upon eternal life will help us to give material things their rightful place on our life.

We should live everyday as that is the last day of our life. We need to remember that all that we have comes from God. So we should be able to give some of it back to give glory to him. Some of us find it hard to put $10 in the offertory basket even though we can afford. Your tithing to Church should be part of your household budget and not searching for the wallet when the offertory basket comes around. Plan your tithing and come prepared to Mass. The envelopes are mailed to you if you are registered member of the Church. That envelope is the wrapper for your gift to the Lord. When you give a gift to someone won’t you wrap it beautifully and write your name on it? Your gift to the Lord on Sunday too needs to be planned prepared. We all got to make sacrifices. Nothing happens without sacrifices. It is the Lord who gives you health and wealth. He can take it away from you any minute. As you can see in the bulletin this weekend we are not bringing enough money each month to pay our bills. We are $22000 in the red for the past six months. In order to keep the church going we got to make sacrifices. What the Bible requires us to tithe is 10% of your total income. Ask yourselves what is the greatest sacrifice you could make to share your blessings with God. Our gifts become sacrifices when it hurts. Everyone putting $1 will not help us to keep the church open.

Most of our costs are fixed expenses like the mortgage, salaries, telephone bills, utilities and so on. These do not change because it is summer. The upkeep of a facility like ours is very expensive. I have been here for a month now. In the last one month we had to fix a leaking roof at the school section which was nearly $2000. Walk-in cooler had to be repaired and that was nearly $4000. To fix the leak of the baptismal font was about $600. Couple of weeks before I came all the burned out lights in the parking lot were replaced for $2000. The new mike on the ambo is $600. This is a good mike, sounds better. Next week we are going to replace the lights in the church with LED lights which is going to cost about $3000. This is something that was planned earlier. All these expenses in about a month and half. Many of us do not know all these and what it takes to run the church.

Money alone is not enough to keep the church open. We got to give God our time and talents as well. When you volunteer at church you save money and bring church expenses down. If you are landscaper or an electrician or a plumber or carpenter or mason or possess any other skills and would share your skill with the Church we will be able to keep our expenses down. I can think of many persons who were huge help to my previous church in Ontario. One of them particularly stands out. He is Rogelio Augilar who owned a landscaping company. He took care of the lawn of the Church and the School ground for free. That saved the Church nearly $8000 every year. When he did that God blessed him with so much more work that every year he told me that he had to hire more employees and his work grew from three employees to 12 employees. We got to be generous to the Lord with our talents, time and material wealth.

 If our destination is heaven we need to show concrete acts of detachment by way of sharing the material goods we have with God and others. The destiny that awaits us is the consequences of our action here on earth. Therefore, let us store up treasure in heaven having fixed our minds on things that are above. Let us not get lost in the means but have always eternal life as the goal before us.