

GOSPEL

LUKE 12:13-21

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance.' 'My friend,' he replied 'who appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of your claims?' Then he said to them, 'Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life is not made secure by what he owns, even when he has more than he needs.'

Then he told them a parable: 'There was once a rich man who, having a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, "What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say, to my soul: 'My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time.'" But God said to him, "Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?" So it is when a man stores up treasure for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What brings you security in life - and is it a security that is true and lasting?
2. What do you think makes us 'rich' in the sight of God?

A REFLECTION BY POPE BENEDICT

Today, the 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Word of God spurs us to reflect on what our relationship with material things should be. Although wealth is a good in itself, it should not be considered an absolute good. Above all, it does not guarantee salvation; on the contrary, it may even seriously jeopardize it. It is wisdom and virtue not to set one's heart on the goods of this world for all things are transient, all things can suddenly end.

This teaching on true wisdom is introduced by one of the crowd: "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me". In answering, Jesus puts him on guard against those who are influenced by the desire for earthly goods with the Parable of the Rich Fool who having put away for himself an abundant harvest stops working, uses up all he possesses, enjoying himself and even deceives himself into thinking he can keep death at an arm's length. However God says to him "Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?".

The fool in the Bible, the one who does not want to learn from the experience of visible things, that nothing lasts for ever but that all things pass away, youth and physical strength, amenities and important roles. Making one's life depend on such an ephemeral reality is therefore foolishness. The person who trusts in the Lord, on the other hand, does not fear the adversities of life, nor the inevitable reality of death: he is the person who has acquired a wise heart, like the Saints.

REFLECTION QUESTION

- What has struck you from this reflection by the Holy Father?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Move to prayers of thanks and praise to God
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps reciting the 'Glory Be' or similar prayer.