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18th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 31 July 2022

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31 July 2022

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

In the Gospel Jesus asks what we treasure. This matches well with our Colossians passage which calls us to set aside greed for a life in the image of God. We are challenged about what our baptism commends to us?

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you call us to be poor in spirit.
Lord, have mercy.

You lift us up to the Father.
Christ, have mercy.

You show us the way to life in you.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

Draw near to your servants, O Lord,
and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness,
that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide,
you may restore what you have created
and keep safe what you have restored.

The main thrust of the prayer takes its focus from the faithful's acclamation of God as their 'creator' and 'guide'. In light of this, they are confident that God will be present to them and grant bountiful assistance. In particular they request that God, in divine government, restore and preserve as restored, what God has created. However, the broader liturgical usage of the terms 'creator', 'guide', 'restore' and 'keep safe' bespeaks a far richer understanding of the oration. Together they put forward God's entire economy of creation, salvation and renewal. 'Creator' and 'guide' point to the point to the original creation narrated in Genesis, the ongoing creation of all that is good, and to the recreation in Christ of sinful humanity and sin-damaged creation. Implicit in the divine creative activity is God's continuing care and maintenance of what

God has established in love. God's governance and preservation denote the consolation, inspiration, direction, healing and sanctification that God provides to protect the faithful from sin and to lead them to eternal life.

In the ancient sources the prayer was used in Lent, highlighting the need for restoration and God's ongoing preservation. There is also a strong historical link to the vicissitudes suffered by the Christian citizens of Rome during a siege by the Arian king Witiges in 537. In light of that it is not surprising that the restoration of an original order of peace and security be uppermost in their minds. If God restores it, then God can also be depended upon to preserve it. (Gerard Moore)

First Reading

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:21-23

What profit comes to us for all the labour of our bodies and the anxiety of our hearts?

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 89:3-6, 12-14, 17. R. v. 1

In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

The psalm encourages us in a similar vein to Ecclesiastes to know that all we really need is God.

Second Reading

Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

God's love sees differently, and in baptism we are invited to take on those eyes.

Gospel Reading

Luke 12:13-21

Jesus the prophet asks us what we treasure, and how our actions reflect this.

Reflection

We begin our reflection with not the most encouraging reading from one of the more discouraging books of the scriptures. The passage is set to allow for a larger discussion of the Gospel, where Jesus warns about the lure of riches and their ephemeral nature.

Our sacred author has a depressed outlook, yet there is a wisdom here that is hard to shake. We are not masters of what transpires next. The fruits of our labour and effort are not always ours to enjoy, and even our labour and effort can be a constant source of sorrow and grief.

Within this is the question of where we place our 'profit'. It is not an easy question, rather something of a constant in our lives that we work through differently as we approach different milestones in our living. Our experience has a way of winnowing through our experiences, and exposing our own particular 'vanities'.

We have with our Pauline text something of a parallel with the Qoheleth reading. It is not quite an antidote to the drumming sense of 'vanity' we have just encountered, though it delves into the sources of our hope. There is a strong baptismal character at play here. The final sentence of neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, is understood as a baptismal formula. Here it is used as a radical reminder of the newness of life in Christ. The entrenched divisions are swept away, and we now see each other as God sees. Looking through the eyes of the creator and recognising the image of the creator in each person means that our discriminations, prejudices, classifications and racial profiling are deceitful. God's love sees differently, and in baptism we are invited to take on those eyes. For Paul immorality, greed and desire are earthly. As common as these are in us, they are placed against a new set of behaviours in Christ. These are, of course, only real when practised in our lives on earth, but they reflect the deeper calling of living in God.

Not only is it a new way of seeing but a new way of living. Past practices are no longer authentic. The new self has a converted heart. It is linked now to the love of God. It seeks to live within this love, and so works to subdue those things that take it away from this. We live now raised in Christ.

There is a spirituality here that ameliorates the depressive weight of Qoheleth. When done in Christ, our actions have meaning though this is not always clear. Sometimes our 'deaths' are reflected in the prism of Christ's own death, our suffering in his suffering. The life of Christ reveals patterns and events that allow us hope. This accepting the pattern of life through Christ is an ongoing conversion: it is not always straightforward or easy yet works into us as we take on the new self.

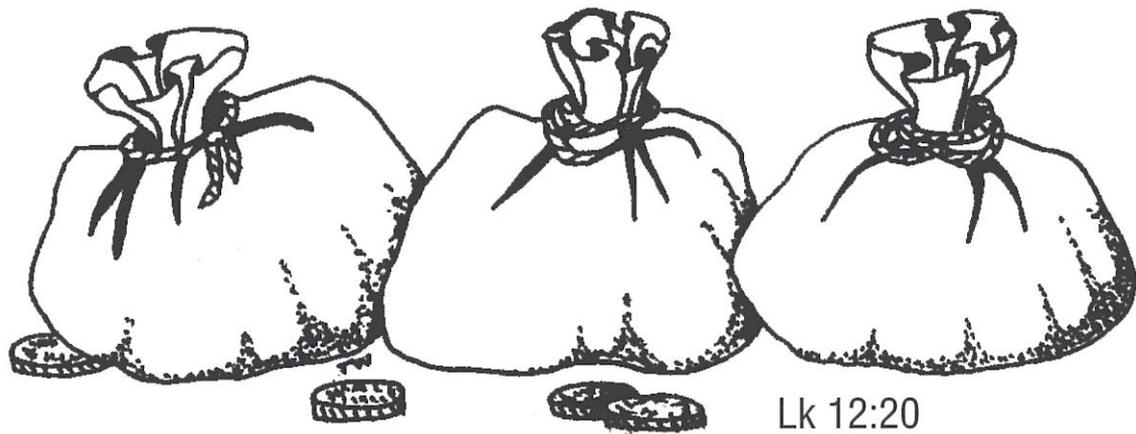
Qoheleth is reflecting more than this, and his text is perhaps an extended lament. We are challenged this week to hold these two experiences and be aware of those around us who are held within them.

Our Gospel begins with a demarcation dispute. While the family member wants justice the dispute is around the role of Jesus. He is not a judge but a prophet. His role is not to solve all problems but to speak the word of God into situations. Throughout the Gospels Jesus constantly is on the look out to avoid being boxed into situations that are not part of his prophetic role. He will not divide up riches, but rather speak to their burden and effect on the soul.

What does life consist of, and what is the place of possessions? Jesus works into these questions through a response to the disinherited brother and a warning about riches. It is worth taking a theological and political reckoning here. Jesus does not praise the accumulation of wealth. Yet this praise for being wealthy has become an oft repeated theme in our political dialogue and our theological environment. As with the teacher, the point is around where our heart lies and what distorts it from the love of God. In other parts of the Gospel Jesus will set out the dangers of reliance on money and love for

riches. Here he is taking up the theme of vanity in Qoheleth. In life is our role to tear down small barns and build bigger ones? And in the coming of inevitable death, the wealth stored up belongs to another, which the beginning of the reading suggests can be an ongoing source of tension and trouble.

Rather the prophet asks what we treasure. This matches well with our Colossians passage which calls us to set aside greed for a life in the image of God. What does our baptism commend to us?



Lk 12:20

To whom will all this wealth of yours go?

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The readings encourage us today to know that all we really need is God, but we offer the following needs of our community and the needs of our world.

Petitions

Let us pray for the leaders of our church, Pope Francis, all the bishops, clergy, religious and lay leaders. May they lead us through the Plenary Council and the Synod in 2023 with faith, hope and love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for the leaders of the world. May they find ways for peace, not war, and use resources to alleviate the poverty of their people.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for all educators. May they work hard to develop themselves and their relationships with those they teach so that they can journey together towards valuable goals based on love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for those who work on the land to provide food for nations throughout the world. May they receive the rain that they need to nurture the earth and may they also be wise in their care of the land.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for our community. May we be inspired to love people more than riches and become more missionary in our use of our resources.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for those who suffer. May those who suffer the effects of war and famine find support in the charitable organisations that can reach them and may we be generous in our support of their work.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Loving God, you are our beginning and our end, we place these needs before you, through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	AOVNG	GA	CWB	CWBII	S&S1	S&S2
Alive and aware			20						
All people that on earth do dwell	25				533	613	448		
Be thou my vision	9					733	455		
Christ is made the sure foundation					482	640			
Come down, O love divine	118				375	653	381		
Eye has not seen	146				466				
In every age				77					
Let all mortal flesh keep silence					190		533		
Lord, be my vision						733			
Lord of creation, to you be all praise					423	739	543		
Love is his word					462	743	553		
My soul is longing for your peace					519	751	559		
O Christ the great foundation					483		565		
O God, our help in ages past	175				459	767	568		
Praise to the Lord.		132				792	586		
Seek, O seek the Lord					211	802	595		
Seek ye first the kingdom of God	48				456		594	160	
The table of God			8						
To live like Jesus			160						
The Beatitudes						817	456		
We live and love your word			118				571		
What does the Lord require							642		

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 89: *In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	JOBF	LPC	PM
Psalm 89	402		pg. 84		pg. 128	

Music selections by Michael Mangan

The bread of life (SHOF) *Based on Jn 6:35* [Communion]