Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 12:13-21): Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.” He replied to him, “Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?” Then he said to the crowd, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.”

Then he told them a parable. “There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, ‘What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?’ And he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, “Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’ Thus will it be for all who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God.

“Though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions”

Fr. Jordi PASCUAL i Bancells
(Salt, Girona, Spain)

Today, Jesus brings us face to face with what is fundamental to our Christian life, our life of relationship with God: becoming rich before Him. That is, filling our hands and our hearts with all kinds of supernatural, spiritual, and grace-filled goods, not material things.

Therefore, in light of today's Gospel, we can ask ourselves: what do we fill our hearts with? The man in the parable was clear: "Rest, eat, drink, be merry!" (Luke 12:19). But this is not what God expects of a good child of His. The Lord has not placed our happiness on inheritances, good meals, the latest model cars, vacations to the most exotic places, country estates, the sofa, beer, or money. All these things may be good, but in themselves they cannot satisfy our soul's longing for fulfillment, and therefore, they must be used well, as the means that they are.

This is the experience of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, whose feast day is so recent. He acknowledged this in his own autobiography: “When he thought about the things of the world, it would produce great pleasure

at the moment; but once bored and tired of it, he would return to reality and feel sadness and aridity of spirit. On the contrary, when he thought of the possibility of imitating the austerities of the saints, he experienced lasting and intense happiness and joy." Each of us can have the same experience.

Material, earthly things are transient and pass away; on the contrary, spiritual things are eternal, immortal, everlasting, and are the only ones that can fill our hearts and give full meaning to our human and Christian lives.

Jesus says it very clearly: "You fool" (Luke 12:20), thus describing those who only have material, earthly, selfish goals. May we at any moment of our existence be able to present ourselves before God with our hands and hearts full of effort to seek the Lord and that which pleases Him, which is the only thing that will lead us to Heaven.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Man has a beautiful duty and obligation: to pray and to love. If you pray and love, you will have found happiness in this world.” (St. John Mary Vianney)

- “You are important! God counts on you for what you are, not for what you possess. In his eyes the clothes you wear or the kind of cell phone you use are of absolutely no concern. He doesn’t care whether you are stylish or not; he cares about you! In his eyes, you are precious, and your value is inestimable.” (Francis)

- “The tenth commandment forbids greed and the desire to amass earthly goods without limit. It forbids avarice arising from a passion for riches and their attendant power (...)” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2,536)