Monday of the Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time

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 the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.”

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

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Today, if we do not cover our ears and close our eyes, the Gospel will deeply move us with its clarity: “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions” (Luke 12:15). What is it that ensures man's life?

We know very well what ensures the life of Jesus, because He himself has told us: “For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to his Son the possession of life in himself” (Jn 5:26). We know that Jesus' life not only comes from the Father, but consists in doing his will, since this is his nourishment, and the Father's will is equivalent to accomplishing his great work of salvation among men, giving his life for his friends, a sign of the most exalted love. Jesus' life, then, is a life received totally from the Father and given totally to the Father himself and, out of love for the Father, to men. Can human life, then, be sufficient in itself? Can it be denied that our life is a gift, that we have received it and that, for that reason alone, we should give thanks? “Nobody can claim to be the master of his own life” (Saint Jerome).

Following this logic, we only need to ask ourselves: What meaning can our life have if it is closed in on itself, if it finds its pleasure in saying: “Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!” (Luke 12:19)? If Jesus' life is a gift always received and given in love, our life—which we cannot deny having received—must become, following Jesus's, a total gift to God and to our brothers and sisters, because “whoever loves his life loses it” (Jn 12:25).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “I have been let down, O my Christ, by my excessive presumption: from the heights, I have fallen very low. But lift me now again so that I may see that I have deceived myself.” (Saint Gregory Nazianzen)

- “The realities of truth and love—our true path—are not found in the world of quantities.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The economy of law and grace turns men's hearts away from avarice and envy (...). The God of the promises always warned man against seduction by what from the beginning has seemed ‘good for food... a delight to the eyes... to be desired to make one wise’ (Gen 3:6).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 2541)