

After the Heart of Jesus ...

*Jesus said, "Take care to guard against all greed,
for though one may be rich,
one's life does not consist of possessions."*

Luke 12:15

The messages of the emptiness of material riches are plentiful this week. In the Old Testament reading Qoheleth proclaims, "Vanity of vanities. Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!" and speaks of the futility of human toil that must leave hard-worked for possessions to those not deserving.

In the Gospel, after Jesus speaks the words above, he tells the parable of the rich man who built bigger barns to store his grain and other possessions with thoughts of living a life of eating, drinking, and being merry. That very night the rich man's life was taken from him, and what good were his possessions then? God's words to him were "You fool!"

Even Paul's letter to the Colossians includes the admonition "Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. ... Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry."

How do we listen to these words against material greed and practically apply them to our daily living? Are we to turn away from all material goods, become monks, and profess a life of poverty? Some have done that, and their simplicity of life in poverty reminds us all that we can live more simply than we do. Yet there isn't a biblical principle of rejection of the material so much as a rejection of the sins associated with the attraction and love of material possessions – greed, evil desires, coveting, idolatry. It is fairly easy in our society to go from possessing material things to being possessed by material things. If our thoughts and planning in life often revolve around what we have and what we want materially then likely our possessions own us rather than the other way around.



I am impressed by the example of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church. His rule of life was to save all he could and give all he could. When he was at Oxford he had an income of £30 a year (1730's money). He lived on £28 and gave £2 away. When his income increased to £60, £90, and £120 \$300 year, he still lived on £28 and gave the rest away. His attitude was "I have all I need right now, and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread."

Perhaps we need not be that stringent in our way of life, but clearly his message is a good one. We should not think we need to spend nearly every dollar we make on ourselves and our possessions simply because we have it to spend. That very attitude is what led God in today's Gospel parable to say to the rich man, "You fool! This night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?" We should be storing up treasures of the things that matter to God.



August is Catholic Charities month, when we will be learning more about the good works that Catholic Charities does in our name for the poor, for abused and neglected children, for the disadvantaged, and for those needing psychological help. On August 19th we will be taking up a collection for both Catholic Charities of DuPage County and our local St. Vincent DePaul Society.

We are in the process of doing a parish census. We want to make sure that our database of parishioners is up-to-date and accurate. All families that are currently registered at St. Walter Church should receive a census form with an explanation letter in the mail. They are being sent in green envelopes that clearly indicate a census form is enclosed. Please complete the form as soon as possible and return it either through the mail, by placing it in the Sunday collection, or by dropping it off at the parish house.

In case you haven't heard ... The Parish Community Fest is coming! Check the bulletins for all the details for the August 26 Fest. If you are interested in volunteering, please let Karen Campe know. Of course I am always concerned that there will be enough Fun for everyone. I would like to have a few extra attractions -like a rock climbing wall and dunk tank. But these need sponsors to make sure that they do not cost us more money than we could make. If you are interested in sponsoring an attraction, please call me at the parish house.

This week, may we store up treasures of the things that matter to God as we live ...

After the Heart of Jesus!

Father John