

PASTOR'S CORNER

In today's Gospel reading from Luke, someone in the crowd says to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." In reply, Jesus says, "Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbiter?" Then Jesus says to the whole crowd, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

Jesus' warning is one which we still need to heed today. But it can be hard to listen to what Jesus is saying to us. With the economy still weak, and unemployment still high, it's difficult *not* to focus on money or possessions, especially if we're struggling just to make ends meet. How can one follow St. Paul's admonition in our second reading from Colossians to "Think of what is above, not of what is earth;" when one is just trying to make it to the next day?

And, yet, our faith and experience tell us that when we get too caught up with material wealth, we can easily lose sight of what is really important. Have we not known relationships that have fallen apart because of concern with money? Have we not known families that have been torn apart because of the very situation that the person in the crowd brings to Jesus: dispute over an inheritance?

Whether we are in need, or not, there is almost always the temptation to greed. Sometimes people in their desperation do things they wouldn't normally do to get what they need. Others, who *do* have enough, can become obsessed with getting more. The temptation is very strong. We can look at the oil spill in the Gulf, or the practices that brought us to the financial crisis in the first place, and we can see how greed can make us blind to safety problems or deaf to common sense.

How do we keep a proper attitude towards the things and the resources we need to survive and thrive in our world? How do we resist the temptation to that greed that can overwhelm us and consume us? By following what St. Paul tells the Colossians, "Think of what is above, not of what is on earth." We need to remember that no matter what earthly possessions we may or may not have, Christ died for our sins, and rose from the dead, out of love for us! We need to put our trust in our loving God. As Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 6, God knows our needs, but we must first seek His kingdom.

When we become attuned to all that God has given us, we are more open to answer His call to give to others. We know how much poverty exists, here and in every place. We know that there are people who are struggling just to get the basic necessities of life. The best way to practice a proper attitude towards the things of this world is to help make sure that everyone has what he or she needs. We can't be like the rich man in the parable that Jesus uses to make His point. We cannot revel in our wealth while others suffer. There is no treasure we can "store up" for ourselves that can out match what God promises us in Jesus Christ! To combat greed, we must be grateful for what has been given to us, and be generous enough to share it with others.

May God continue to bless us all, and may we be generous with the blessings we have received.

In Christ,