

Monday's Gospel: Christ's poverty is our wealth

Gospel for Monday of the 29th Week in Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 12:13-21*)

One of the multitude said to him, “Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.”

But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?” And he said to them, “Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Commentary

After a request that our Lord act as judge in dividing up an inheritance, Jesus tells the parable of the rich

man whose goal in life is to accumulate wealth for himself, and forgets about the needs of others.

It is interesting to see how Jesus reaches people's hearts. From a seemingly unimportant request, Jesus helps that person to face his true problem. It is not so much the inheritance, but his relationship with his brother: what is the point of having so many material goods if in the end you are closed in on yourself, satisfied with yourself, unable to see your brother?

In this parable we can also identify with the main character. Not necessarily because we possess a lot of material wealth, but above all a great spiritual wealth. We are all rich in dreams, hopes, initiatives, talents, abilities.

And the question Jesus asks us is radical: What are you going to do with all that wealth? Are you going to

live for yourself, closed in on yourself, satisfied with yourself?

Pope Francis said: “There is a mystery in the possession of wealth! Riches can seduce us and make us think we live in an Earthly Paradise. But that earthly paradise is a place without horizons. Living without broad horizons is a sterile life, living without hope is a sad life.

Attachment to wealth makes us sad and sterile. I said *attachment*, not *administering wealth properly*, because wealth is for the common good, for everyone. And if God gives riches to someone, it is so that he can use them for the good of everyone, not just for himself, not so that he can close himself up in his heart because then he becomes corrupt and sad. Riches without generosity make us think that we are powerful, like God. But, in the end, they take away the best thing from us, our

hope" (Pope Francis, *Homily in Santa Marta*, 25 May 2015).

In accompanying Christ, we start out poor and end up rich. He gives us his heart so that the concerns of others can fit there, so that we can share what is our own, the gifts that he has given us, with everyone, and enjoy what is good in this world with a big heart.

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