

18TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME – YEAR C

The scene recounted by St. Luke, follows a familiar theme in the ministry of Jesus. A listener poses a vexing moral question and asks Jesus to resolve it. Sometimes this is done to test Jesus but on occasions like this one it reflects an urgent need. Scholars tell us that seeking advice from a Rabbi, in this way, to resolve problems was commonplace within Judaism.

Initially Jesus doesn't seem to want to get into it but then, in his usual way, his answer addresses both the question put to him as well as the deeper question which lies at the heart of all such problems.

So, what are we to make of his answer?

The rich man in our parable foolishly believed that his happiness rested, exclusively, in himself. He believed that amassing greater and greater resources would soothe his anxiety about his future security and bring him peace. Not once does he acknowledge or address God, or the moral teaching of his religion, when considering what he should do. Not once does he consider the needs of the poor. In fact, it doesn't appear to cross his mind to do so.

The rich man is the very epitome of the me culture. He has become suffused by a spirit of narcissism. In truth therefore he is the poorest and the most pitiable of men, because he cares for no one but himself.

But what has he got to do with you and me, we might ask?

We are neither spectacularly wealthy or, spectacularly selfish. Today as always however, Jesus words are for all of us to hear. Today Jesus' words challenge us to question whether we have become overly self-preoccupied or overly fixated on material and financial comforts. Are we continuously craving more: a better home; a better car; more luxurious holidays; stylish clothing, even though what we have is perfectly adequate to meet our needs and millions of our brothers and sisters are languishing in poverty and destitution in the poorer regions of our world?

Like the man who calls out to Jesus for justice in today's gospel, the poor and the marginalised, in our own society and in our world, cry out to God for a fair share of the fruits of creation.

Rev. Kevin Webb

We who are more affluent will one day have to account for our stewardship of these resources.

Let us remember the words of Jesus,

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

(Luke 6:38)