

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, August 2, 2020

Filling Your Heavenly Closet

Written by Allison Gingras

Isaiah 55:1-3

Romans 8:35, 37-39

Matthew 14:13-21



Is your storehouse in heaven well stocked? Do graces come tumbling out like your belongings when you open the closet door? How will you avoid being the fool who spends more time accumulating treasures here on earth than worrying about amassing a spiritual bounty?

Our “stuff” can build a barrier to an eternity in heaven. Whenever we place work or belongings ahead of making time for prayer or participating in the sacraments, we’ve made them more important than God. Work is good. It is a blessing to have gainful employment, especially if you are passionate about the field or career. Perhaps you have heard the expression, “Do you work to live or live to work?” Putting extra energy and care into your job, in itself, is not sinful behavior. God entrusts us with gifts and talents we are called to use for others, society, and yes, even ourselves. However, when that desire to use these gifts goes beyond satisfying life’s necessities, we have to take a careful look at our motives and, even more so, our tactics.

1 Timothy 6:10 is an often-misquoted Scripture; people say, “Money is the root of all evil,” when in actuality, St. Paul says, “For the LOVE [emphasis is mine] of money is the root of all (kinds of) evils.” Nothing, absolutely nothing, should come before the love of God and the pursuit of heaven. Of course, we can add extra to our bank accounts for the future, our children, a home, or even a vacation. God has allowed these blessings in our world for us to enjoy. Luke’s Gospel serves as a reminder to watch our intentions for collecting the wealth and being conscious of how we use it while we are alive. In addition to caring for our needs, a Christian heart, one seeped in the virtue of justice, seeks to use their blessings for the good of others. Do we look to help those who are without, before plumping our storehouses?

Balance is the goal — everything in moderation, everything ordered toward God and for good. If we maintain this way of thinking when it comes to our desire “to rest, eat, drink, and be merry,” we will not fall into the same folly as the rich man in the parable.

Jesus’ parable has two parts to the equation, what we store here on earth and what treasury we build in heaven. Since both garner equal attention, let us consider how to ensure we keep the scale tipped toward heaven. Luckily, the Gospels provide ample examples through the teachings and life of Jesus, our model of faith, along with Mary, the first and greatest disciple.

God never asks the impossible in His wisdom and mercy; He thankfully never leaves us guessing. The Catholic faith consists of a veritable warehouse of options to build our spiritual eternal wealth portfolio. Build a storehouse of grace which is abundantly available in the sacraments — efficacious outward signs of God’s grace. By participating in the Mass, finding time to spend in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and attending the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, we will build a spiritual nest egg.

A disciple continues to learn from the Master, so included in our plans should be ongoing opportunities to educate ourselves regarding matters of faith. The Scriptures, Catholic Catechism of the Church, and a cornucopia of spiritual reading available all provide excellent continuing religious education options. Online opportunities emerge almost daily with inspiring, informative virtual Catholic conferences, bible studies, videos, and blogs, offering a wide selection from which you can choose.

“One’s life does not,” as Jesus warns, “consist of possessions.” One day, each one of us will have our life demanded of us. Which closet do you want to have a harder time shouldering closed? The closet filled with things long forgotten, moth fodder, or worse yet, those possessions you have yet to finish paying? Or, do you long to stand before Jesus, knowing the room he has prepared for you in his Father’s house is brimming with prayer, merit, grace, and love?

Allison Gingras

PRAYER

Help me discern,
as I look around my home and my to-do list,
which objects and activities bring me closer to
you.

Provide me the grace to work each day
building up my heavenly storehouse.
Amen.