

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Our seasonal theme of choosing and judgment continues to pursue us and make us feel uncomfortable. Week by week, the experience of praying together, of affirming our faith, and of hearing the Scriptures, will not let us be a passive audience, merely soaking up the atmosphere of faith. We must confront our living Lord, and our own response to him.

The Church first patterns this response for us in our baptism. Especially if your parish will be celebrating Holy Baptism at All Saints', these weeks are a good time to talk about baptism with your child. Most of us are baptized as infants: our parents choose, for us, that at least while we belong to them, we will affirm Jesus as our Lord. And like Jesus himself, the baptismal service tells us that choosing him means turning away from something else. We are asked to *renounce* "Satan and the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God;" the "evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God;" and the "sinful desires that draw us from the love of God" (Prayer Book, p. 302). We are then asked to choose Jesus, to declare our faith, and to promise, with God's help, to live as befits it.

Maybe we would more truly realize what a "moment of decision" this is if we turned the questions around, like this: "Do you want to belong to the Devil, and fight God, and care most of all about getting your own way?" "NO!" "Do you want to tell lies, and cheat, and do things that hurt people or waste or spoil God's world, because it looks like fun, or impresses people, or helps you get ahead, or everybody else is doing it?" "NO!" "Do you want to grab for yourself whatever tastes good or feels good or looks exciting or might be fun to try or nice to have, even if you don't need it or it's not good for you?" "NO!" "Do you want to belong to Jesus, and love him, and know he loves you?" "YES!"

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Are these good translations? How would you rephrase these questions for your child? It's hard, isn't it? You have to decide what they really mean! No more hiding behind the familiar, resonant, vaguely theological language; time to stand up and be counted!

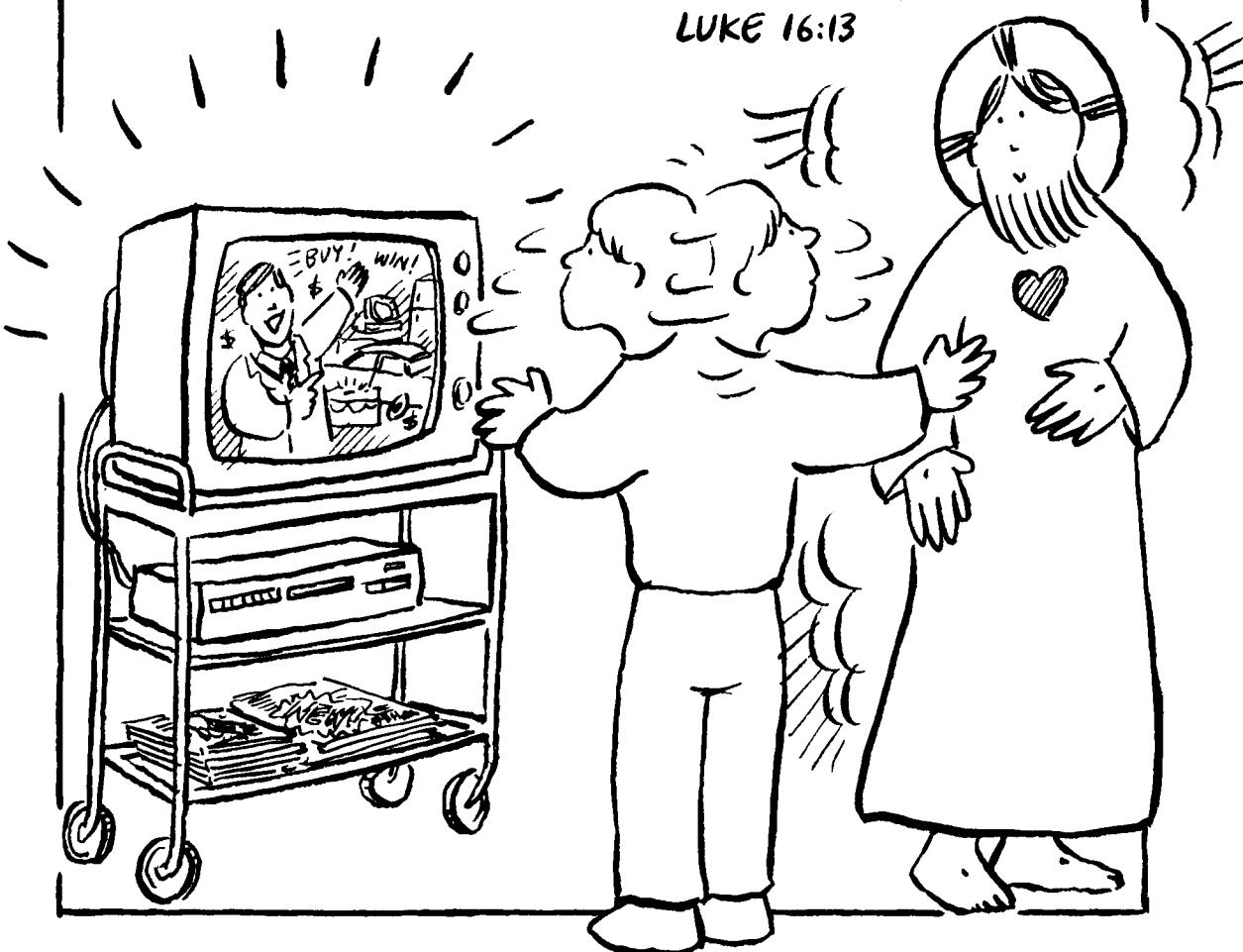
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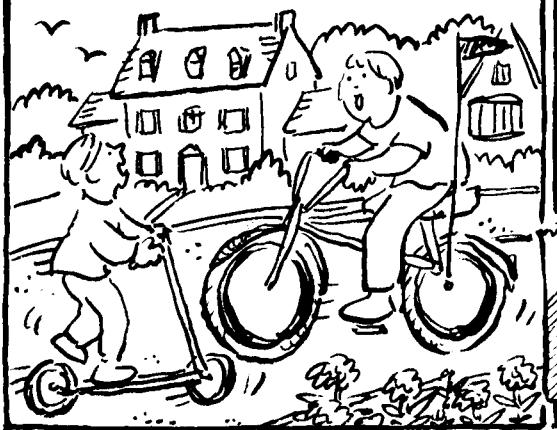
Jesus said, "No one can be the servant of two different masters at once. You can't love both God and money."

LUKE 16:13



THE BIBLE WARNS US ABOUT MONEY.

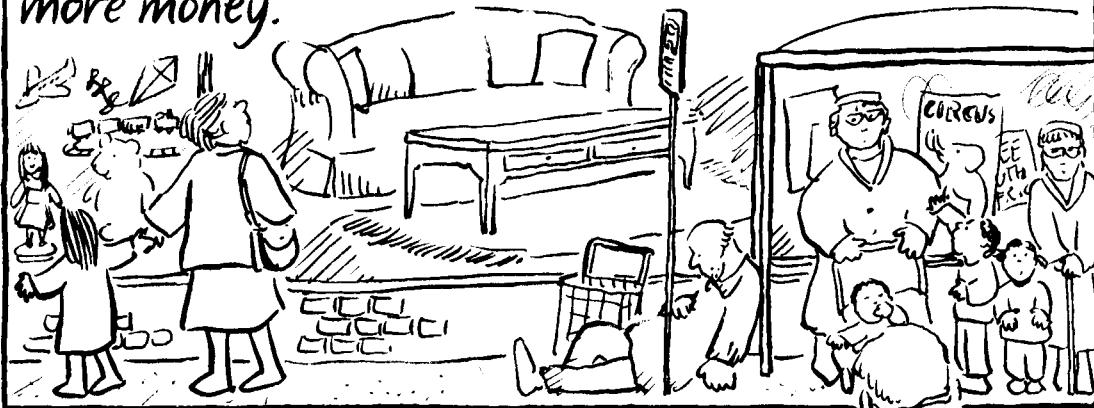
The world is full of useful and beautiful things. If we have them, we can be thankful to God.



Money is useful. We work hard to earn money, and use it to buy things we need or things we like.



But it's easy to start wanting more than we need, and caring more and more about having more money.



Many people don't even have enough. If we always want more and more, we aren't living in God's love.

When people love money more and more, they stop caring about anything else. They stop caring that other people don't have enough. They don't mind cheating other people, or grabbing from them. They even stop enjoying the nice things that money can buy. They just want the feeling of power that comes from having lots of money.

God says, "Stop! Care about the right things!"



When we are baptized, we promise to love God more than money. Draw a family making that promise.