



Some, indispensable, for we cannot live without eating, without drinking, without dressing, without protecting ourselves under a roof. Others, important, because any food or any house is not enough to preserve a healthy body. Others, accessory: it is possible to live without televisions and without some sophisticated electronic instruments.

At the end, let us succumb to the worst form of materialism: the one that invades hearts without us noticing.

When materialism triumphs, we are chaining ourselves more and more to objects and sensations that create dependencies, that absorb the spirit. This even happens with regard to things like food: sometimes we become dependent on some foods that involve a lot of expenses and few results. Other times it happens regarding the accessory: we depend almost frantically on the last Smartphone, on the car that just took this company out, on the film that everyone sees so as not to feel out of context.

Thus, without realizing it, we are trapped on a horizon where only what you see, what you touch, what you smell, what you feel, what you hear, what you hear. So, we are not able to recognize that all these realities, some very important, come and go; and we forget that in every human being there is a deep, insuppressible dimension that needs space and time to grow.

Recognizing that we are chained to the sensitive, to the material, is the first step in breaking with pathological materialism. Because the sick person asks for medicines when he recognizes his precarious situation. And the modern world has made us sick, little by little, through thousands of stimuli that tie and subjugate on the horizon of purely material.

But the sick person recognizes himself as sick when compared to what it means to be healthy. The great danger of materialism is precisely that it satisfies and flatters the senses, that it gets drunk with electronic games or with cars that go at high speed. Thus, we do not realize that we are far from a wonderful horizon, that of spirituality, nor are we able to recognize that there are much deeper beauties and

joys than those experienced with a good film or with an afternoon of jogging.

At other times, fortunately, the stun of matter tires us out. It is then when we can ask ourselves whether it is enough for us to run after what produces pleasure, or whether it is worth stopping for a moment to think about the full meaning of human life: of one's own and that of those who live near or far.

The saturation of matter cannot quench the thirst for spirituality that lies in every human heart. That thirst, however, can only begin to be quenched if we take away some of the time and money (also money) that we invest in the material to stop us from thinking a little about life and death, about time and the eternal, about the Earth and what we find oars beyond the grave.

Then the heart can fly above the immediate, it comes to consider serious, deep, indispensable, decisive issues.

We thus begin to think of justice and beauty, the truth and the value of every human existence, solidarity and the family, God and the world of heaven.

It doesn't seem easy, but it's possible. We all have, as Plato explained, that eye of the soul that allows us to see farther and more deeply. Just turn off some gadgets, stop counting how much money is left in the bank. We will then remember what Saint-Exupéry taught in his perhaps best-known work, *The Little Prince*: Only with the heart can one see well; the essentials are invisible to the eyes.