

**Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 12: 13-21.**

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." He replied to him, "Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?" Then he said to the crowd, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions." Then he told them a parable. "There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, 'Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!'" But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God."

Introductory Prayer:

Oh God, I come to you today with all my human frailty. You know me better than I know myself. I am in your presence to accompany and console you, not to seek consolation or a nice feeling for myself. Even if I get distracted during our time together, I offer myself to you completely.

Petition:

Lord, give me wisdom to understand what is truly important in this life.

1. The Scorecard of Life:

Driving down the road, a bumper sticker is often seen: The one who dies with the most toys wins. This is a contemporary rendition of the mantra of Jesus rich fool: Eat, drink and be merry. Juggling credit cards and all kinds of financing schemes, many people live life like the rich fool in today's Gospel. Is the drive for material pleasure, or security, impoverishing my soul?

2. A Bigger Barn vs. a Bigger Heart:

What will truly make us happy? Glossy magazine ads are, for some, a source of inspiration on this point. Basically, they are about bigger barns: a hotter car, redder lipstick, spectacular vacations. The rich fool believes that by increasing his capacity for material pleasure, he will be happier. But it's an illusion. Like the running wheel for a gerbil, it is lots of movement without getting anywhere. We invest energy and effort

acquiring things, but the bigger barn brings us little joy. That's because our hearts -- not our barns -- are what really need to be enlarged. Our heart longs for love. That Augustinian restlessness will never leave us in peace until we have encountered the Lord who loves us and discovered him in the relationships ordained by his providence.

3. When the Final Curtain Is Drawn:

At the end of this parable, Jesus in essence says, You can't take it with you. There's a place in Rome in which this is graphically depicted. The Capuchin church of St Mary of the Immaculate Conception, on Via Veneto, is affectionately known as the Bone Church. Inside there is an amazingly designed and arranged display made completely out of the bones of four thousand Capuchin friars! While it may strike at modern sensitivities as somewhat morbid, like today's Gospel it teaches an important lesson. All those bones look alike. Unless you are a forensic expert, you cannot tell who was fat or thin, smart or dull, handsome or homely. Death is the great leveler. Earthly advantages dissolve. Material goods stay in this world. We go to the Lord to render an account of our lives at death. As the little sign on the wall of the Capuchin ossarium says, One day, we were like you. One day, you will be like us.

Conversation with Christ:

Lord Jesus, so often I find my eyes looking on the good things of this world more as ends than means. I need to keep my priorities straight always: you first and then everything else, inasmuch as they lead me to you. Give me the wisdom to realize that life is short and it must be lived for you alone.

Resolution:

I will live charity today as fervently as if I knew this day were my last.