

In our first reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes Qoheleth chides: **All things** ... are vanity!" It questions what we mortals get from all the toil and strain that we endure under the sun, when at death, we must leave everything behind for someone else to enjoy it. That is "vanity" in the sense of **"worthlessness"**.

And St. Paul similarly implores: ... seek what is **above** ... **not** ... of what is on earth. He urges us to **reject** the wisdom of **this** world when he says: "Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire ... greed that is idolatry ... lying. ..."

In the Gospel reading from St. Luke, Jesus reminds us: "... though one may be rich, one's life does **not** consist of material possessions." Jesus laments those who "store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God." **This** is what St. Paul is talking about when he counsels: "Seek the things that are **above** ...".

And they **are** treasures indeed! ... and these are treasures that we can start collecting **now**. And many of these are also treasures that we can enjoy while we are here on earth. To begin with we have the priceless treasure of our **faith** ... bequeathed to us by our Savior through His Church. And our faith brings us another priceless treasure ... that of Hope! And If we have faith and hope in our Savior and His promises ... we cannot help but have the treasure of love! And the more we love the more we are loved!

In all three of our readings we get the same message. So why is it so important that we must hear this message? Because ...once more ... we find that the wisdom of God ... which we hear in our readings ... is **completely** at odds with the wisdom of the world.

We, of course, **are** people of faith who live the Gospel of Our Lord ... and **not** the gospel of the World ... and **yet** ...? Most of us subscribe to that axiom of Thomas Paine: “What we obtain too **cheaply** ... we esteem too **lightly** ...”. And whereas this is undoubtedly true when we are dealing with the things of the world ... I think ... if we are honest ... sometimes we mistakenly apply this principle to the things that are above. “Do we take God’s **love** ... and His **gifts** for granted ... and fail to realize how ... **precious** they are ... **because** they are **free**? Freely given to **us** ... **yes** ... but purchased at a **terrible** price ... Christ’s own suffering and death!

And we know these things. After all, we come to Mass and faithfully listen to the readings and the homilies ... week after week. But then ... **after** Mass ... we leave church and ... go live in the so called “**real**” world ... and there ... of course ... we hear the gospel of the **world**. It screams at us that to be truly happy we need to **acquire** ... this particular car ... or this piece of electronic equipment ... or these trendy items of clothing. And for sure ... most of these things are **not** evil in themselves ... and some of them we actually **need** ... but the gospel of the **world** screams at us that the **more** we acquire ... the **happier** we will be.

And ... of course ... if we are to **have** all this ... we must have “**money**”. And so it follows that the focus of our lives must be the accumulation of wealth. And sometimes this accumulation of wealth becomes an end in itself ... a **god** ... which St Paul refers to as the “greed that is idolatry”.

And it makes no sense to the wisdom of the world that God could be so loving ... so generous as to just **give** us His treasures . The **world** says: “there is **always** a bill ... always a **price**!” Well ... there **is** a price! God reaches out to us to offer his unconditional love. The price is: **we** ... have to reach out **our** hand to **Him** ... and take it. But I wonder ... if we **hesitate** ... because ... to reach out our hands to God ... we might just need to let **go** of some of our so-called treasures ... of **this** world.