

SUNDAY 18 (C) (2019)

A) INTRODUCTION

- my mother was born Penang in Malaya and lived there until the Japanese invasion in 1942
- she and her family were evacuated in great haste and went to Western Australia
- they had to leave everything behind, and what she said she regretted most was losing all the family photographs
- I expect that many of us would say that if the house caught fire and everyone got out safely, the objects we would then want to rescue most of all would be photographs
- perhaps because they, more than anything else, carry precious memories

B) THE RICH MAN

- In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a parable in which a rich man loses everything, and God calls him a fool
- Strong words from the God who is compassionate and merciful
- Why is he called a fool?
- Not because death catches him out
- Not because he is rich
- but because his wealth blinds him to certain other important realities.
- he is a fool because he does not think of God, he does not think of eternal life, and he does not think about his obligations to the poor.
- he is utterly selfish

C) THE RICH MAN DOES NOT THINK OF GOD

- Jesus says, "a man's life is not made secure by what he owns."
- that is exactly what the rich man was trying to do, to find security in having lots of possessions rather than placing all his hope and trust in God
- and this is surely a common experience among people today.
- Some people try to seek security by surrounding themselves with things.
- others try to impress with their abilities, or health or good looks.
- Others still because they have some kind of standing in society
- it's not that these things are bad in themselves, but that we tend to cling to them obsessively
- whatever it is that we do cling to, what would life be like if it were suddenly taken away from us?
- That is what happened to the rich man in the parable, and when his belongings were taken away from him, he had nothing left.

D) WHERE DO WE FIND OUR TRUE SECURITY?

- We should look no further than the fact that we are created in God's own image, loved and raised up by him to share in his own life.
- That is where our true worth and our true security lie, because they can never be taken away from us.
- Even if our material possessions, our health, our social standing, our very life are taken away from us, we know that we are still loved and honoured by God
- nothing can separate us from him.

E) THE RICH MAN DOES NOT THINK OF ETERNAL LIFE

- His whole aim is to enjoy himself in the here and now
- "My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time."
- Not that eating and drinking and having a good time are to be frowned upon.
- What is foolish is to imagine that there is no more to life than that.

F) THE RICH MAN IGNORES HIS OBLIGATIONS TO THE POOR

- The story is told as a warning against avarice of any kind
- at the end Jesus says, "So it is when a man stores up treasures for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God."
- The one who is avaricious, the one who thinks only of himself, and fails to make himself rich in God's sight, is the one who is forgetful of the poor.
- Riches in themselves are not evil, but they carry with them the responsibility to use them well.

G) IDIOT

- God very rarely appears in parables, but he does appear in this one
- he calls the rich man a fool or an idiot
- the Greek origin of our word idiot means "the one who is alone"
- the rich man is a fool because he does not share any of his goods with others, or any part of himself with others
- he is created in God's image but he reflects nothing of God's generosity, or God's self-giving
- the true children of God, the true disciples of Christ, are the ones who are prepared to be generous with all that they have and all that they are
- and in that way they do become truly rich and truly wise.

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