

Reflections

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Treasure in Heaven

Jesus speaks to his own on the use of earthly goods. He proposes to them to accumulate spiritual and eternal goods instead of material and perishable things: "Store up riches for yourselves in Heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and robbers cannot break in and steal. For your heart will always be where your treasures are."

And we already know that it is not money or riches as such, but the abuse is what is condemned by Jesus. Because the great danger always exists that man is not the owner of his goods, but that he becomes their slave. And the true Christian, the new man must be a free man: free from all inner slavery, from all uncontrolled binding to earthly goods and riches.

And greed is one of the many forms of our egoism, that which is very well within ourselves and against which we must to battle our entire life.

In general, God does not demand that we renounce money and material goods. What He asks of us is that we place them at the service of others. "Give alms; and store for yourself a treasure in Heaven." He who has material goods should know that the true richness is not what he possesses but that which he gives to his brothers in need. Man will always be happier giving than receiving. And by giving of his richness, he will experience the generosity of God.

But richness carries within itself a still greater danger than that of inner slavery. And it is that it does not bring man closer to God, rather he is separated from God. The rich man thinks he can do without God. He places all of his confidence in his goods. He severs his relationship with Divine Providence. He believes his riches allow him to leave God aside. He expects to continue ahead alone, by his own means, without having to turn to God.

On the other hand, the poor – that is – the man who seeks to have a treasure in Heaven, realizes he depends totally on God. He is clearly aware of his human limitation.

Basically, each man, even not knowing it – is a pauper. And material poverty is the visible sign of that poverty which is deeper and more universal: our moral poverty, our miserable faith, our feeble love. We are all paupers before God, with our guilt, our misery, our limitations.

The rich man separates himself from God, but he also separates himself from his brethren. On the contrary, the pauper is fraternal: he opens himself to others as he opens himself to God, he shares his things with them. He knows well that our goods are family goods, at the service of all the members. The pauper is not a person who has nothing, but one who makes useful all he has. He realizes it is better to give than to receive.

But not all acknowledge it before Him. Only he who knows and acknowledges his weakness and smallness before God, places all his confidence in Him, hopes all in Him, seeks his powerful protection. In that attitude he empties himself and he surrenders to the Father in childlikeness. And because he is open and available for God, there is room for divine action.

"Where your treasure is, your heart will also be there. And where is my treasure? Do I seek the goods of this world or do I seek God's riches? Do I dedicate my time to earthly interests or to God's interests? What is the meaning, the true goal of my life?"

Father Joseph Kentenich, founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, often told us: The meaning of my life as a Christian is to seek God, to return to God, to walk toward the Father.

Questions for reflection

1. Where is my treasure?
2. Do I have clothing in my closet which I have not used in years?
3. Do I help charitable institutions?

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