

6th Ordinary Sunday
February 13, 2022
“Where Is Our Reliance?”

Jer 17:5-8
1 Cor 15:12...20
Lk 6:17...26

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Few, if any, would question the premise that we live in one of the most affluent nations of the world. Most Americans have more – and are able to do more – than hundreds of millions elsewhere. Yes, we have our poor. We have our homeless. Many must struggle from paycheck to paycheck. But we don't have the starving masses of many of the other countries.

Nevertheless, are we, Americans, any better off emotionally and spiritually, than those who are really poor? It is really easy to become completely reliant on our material things and our technology. But we could be in mortal danger of losing our souls!

We might have everything we want for the moment – We might be able to go anywhere and do anything we want. But we can be hollow in our deepest selves. We can have empty and barren souls and spirits! And this is exactly what Jeremiah was trying to say in the first reading for today.

Jeremiah says that we are, actually, cursed if we put our trust in soulless material things and godless humanity. For if we have turned away from the Lord God and His ways – we are like a barren bush in the desert. We might be alive – But we will fail to produce the good things that God put us on earth to do!

On the other hand, if we live in God – If we trust and rely on God – We will have nothing to fear. For even though we live in a harsh and hostile world or environment – we will survive. We will be productive of the things of God – Because we will be rooted in the life, the love, the will of God who placed us where we are! Moreover, we will have peace of heart and soul even when our material life is hard and things go awry.

St. Luke continues this theme in the Gospel selection. What Jesus says should lead us to look at our own lives and search our souls. Do we have things “too easy”? Is our life “too good”?

We have enough money to pay our bills – We have enough to eat – We are accepted and well thought of. But do we take our lifestyle for granted? Do we keep God at our center? Do we see the danger of material wealth of any kind – or the danger of being recognized for our material successes?

Certainly it is possible to possess great material wealth and still be truly centered in God. It is also possible to be poor and totally bereft of God. What Jesus is trying to teach us is that our trust and reliance must always be in God. It must never be on human or material things.

Furthermore, we will be judged by the way we used our material blessings and our wealth. How generous have we been toward the poor, the hungry, the suffering – here and throughout the world?

Jesus also has something to say about those who are always looking for a good time without any concerns to trouble them. He contrasts these with those who weep and are sad. Are we a comfort to others when they are sad? Are we, at least, good listeners – and do we try to share their emotional burdens? Do we weep in our own souls: for the state of the world today – for the plight of a divided America – for the injustice, the inequity, the privation and the suffering of hundreds of millions elsewhere? Do we understand that those who the culture disdains, ridicules, and rejects – might very well be modern prophets sent by God?

Brothers and Sisters, the Christian life is a journey with Jesus. As disciples, we must live with our total reliance on God, as Jesus did, himself. We will never be satisfied or feel peace if we rely on the material things of this world.

However, in our daily struggles we can have every hope. Because Jesus, our brother and guide, came from God. His rising from the dead proved that all his claims were valid and every promise, true. His Gospel message will help us sort out everything we face on our journey. Moreover, as Jesus rose, we also will rise some day! In the meantime, his words and life will be a guide for us. His sacraments, especially the Eucharist, will nourish and sustain us.

So, let us pray that we never lose our way on this great journey to the Eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

Amen.

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Msgr. Russell G. Terra