

18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

August 1, 2010

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA
Rev. Jeff McGowan

1ST READING: ECCLESIASTES 1:2, 2:21-23

All is vanity!

PSALM 90

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart.

2ND READING: COLOSSIANS 3: 1-5, 9-11

Here there is not Greek and Jew.

GOSPEL: LUKE 12: 13-21

Take care to guard against all greed.

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Today's readings are about planning and seeing the world as God sees it.

The city of Agra in India is universally known for its beautiful Taj Mahal. Agra is also home to many mosques. An old inscription on one of those mosques might surprise the modern visitor. It reads: "Jesus on whom peace be has said, 'The world is merely a bridge; you are to pass over it and not build your dwellings on it.'" Perhaps our priorities need an adjustment so we do not lose sight of what we might carry with us beyond the bridge.

Within every society, each segment has its own image of reality. When we hear reality expressed by someone, we might want to ask, "who says?" For example, who says the Jews are God's chosen people? Well the Jews, of course. And they are right; just as all God's children are God's chosen people. St. Paul in his Letter to the Colossians which we just heard, wrote: "*Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is in all.*" Wisdom prevails when we question even our own bias.

I confess that building a nest egg and a merry retirement sounds like a good plan to me. But to the man building bigger barns and retiring to enjoy his wealth, Jesus says, "*you fool?*" In the Jewish Scriptures, "fool" was the name given to one who failed to take God into consideration in every aspect of his life. There are a lot of suffering people around. Nature is beyond our control. Our brothers and sisters along the Gulf are suffering from an oil drilling catastrophe. Unemployment is sapping the strength of our country. Many people who have

jobs are miserable, but feel enslaved because they dare not quit in this economy. Businesses in the United States are failing in record numbers, bankruptcies and foreclosures are epidemic. Families are stressed. People are depressed. Our values are being tested. It seems like we are following the devil-possessed-swine over the cliff. An older priest told me he has a constant headache; in 25 years of priesthood, he has never seen so many people with so many serious problems.

To be Christian is to believe that we can change the world. To follow Christ is to choose to lead others toward the kingdom of God. Solidarity with Jesus of Nazareth begins with our Baptism, but it is the daily and deliberate conversion to Christ that causes the seed of faith to grow and express in words and works that bring life to the values and challenges of the Gospels. The religious people of his day asked: "Why doesn't he talk about kosher laws or keeping the Sabbath or even sexual morality? Why doesn't Jesus stick to religion and leave our money and possessions to us?" Well, the point is, Jesus was interested in our reality and where our treasure is our hearts are present. He wasn't judging, he wasn't being philosophical either, he was merely observing a fact of the human condition. Once we put God first in our lives and our plans every decision falls into place. We know what we need to do with our money and our possessions. Who says: God tells us to tithe the first ten percent of the harvest, our income, to God's work in gratitude? The inspired word of the Bible says it. Do you want to believe the Bible? Who says: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the poor, visit the sick, be good neighbors like the Samaritan? Well, Jesus says that, do we wasn't to do what he says? We can let other people, our culture, our media, our own biases define reality for us but Reality is not what we think; it is what God says it is. Mary told the wine stewards, "Do whatever he tells you," and we need to listen to the same advice if we are going to plan our future. Jesus told this story for a reason. He challenges us to hear for ourselves: "This is for all who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God."

We are all on the same bridge and will meet Jesus on the other side. When we do, will he say: "*you fool!*" or "well, done good and faithful servant,

come and share my Father's joy." We need to adjust priorities and plans to God's reality so we may harvest Good News for all eternity!