

Homily: 18th Sunday: Cycle C: 2022: Eccl 1: 2; 2: 21-23; Ps. 90; Col 3: 1-5; 9-11; Lk 12: 13-21

“The ultimate purpose of our life on earth”

Why are we here? Do we ever ask ourselves that fundamental philosophical question? Is it to “*eat, drink and be merry*”, for tomorrow we die? The philosophy of the world is to eat, drink, be merry, i.e., get intoxicated on the passing pleasures of this life and in fact get as much money, fame and pleasure as you can in life because this is probably all there is. Indulge yourself, baby, you deserve it! Is that why we are here? Maybe we are here to do endless work to the detriment of all else? Or are we here for some other reason? Why did God put us here? **The Catechism of the Catholic Church** tells us the answer in a simple but profound way: ***we were made and our purpose in life is to know God, to love God, and to serve God.*** Do we realize that? We can only tap into this reality by living a profound Life of Faith: setting our hearts on becoming rich in what matters to God, not on the passing riches of this world that “*the moth destroys and rust corrodes.*” That is what Jesus is getting at in the Gospel today - so let’s look at this in a little more depth.

1. **To know God** - How do we come to know God? By time and effort - it is not an automatic thing. Grace builds upon nature. God is not simply an intellectual idea; He is a living being: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are called not to simply know about Him, but to KNOW Him on a personal level in our hearts. To be familiar with Him and His ways. This only comes about by perseverance in cultivating a deep interior life, through the indispensable means of prayer and sacred study, as I preached about last weekend. What are we called to do in this regard? *Mass, daily if possible, meditating on the Sacred Scriptures, daily praying the Rosary and the Divine Mercy chaplet, spiritual reading and study of the Catechism, lives of the saints, and good spiritual books; listening to EWTN or other good Catholic talks/podcasts, coming to Eucharistic Adoration, spending some quiet time daily with God, living the Corporeal and Spiritual Works of Mercy in relation to our neighbor, offering our day to God each morning in company with Our Lady and the saints, and trying to live in a spirit of Faith in our duties of vocation, life and work throughout the course of our day, are some of the major ways we prepare the spiritual soil of our hearts and souls to be*

ready when God chooses to reveal Himself to us on a deeper level through the power of grace. This is the noble end of the entire Catholic Spiritual Life: to come to know the Blessed Trinity on an ever deeper and more personal loving level. HOW AWESOME! “*Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you*”, as Jesus told us last week in the Gospel reading.

2. **To love God** - Jesus says in the Gospel of John: “*if you love me, you will keep my Commandments.*” Not some of my Commandments – ALL OF THEM! Love is not primarily a feeling but a choice, a decision of the will. If we say we love God but we are deliberately disobeying His Commandments, we are liars. That is why St. Paul tells us today, “*to seek what is above rather than what is on earth.*” And to “*put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: (sexual) immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, the greed that is idolatry, and lying to one another.*” We need to know what God and the Catholic Church, who speaks in His name, expects of us in order to know what the choice is. Knowledge of the Faith is to lead to the consistent loving choice of **God’s will** which He reveals through His Holy Commandments. Regular (strive for at least monthly according to the saints) reception of the Sacrament of Confession, and practicing some daily forms of self-denial and penance, is an essential need for our souls to have the necessary strength of will to choose to follow God’s way of holiness. Otherwise we will fall into the trap St. Paul talks about today of sexual immorality of various sorts: *be it pre-marital sex, adultery, pornography, impurity with self, etc.*; and also fall into the trap of materialism and greed: *fighting over money constantly, wanting more and more things we don’t really need*; and finally we will constantly be lying to one another to cover up our evil deeds. And it will seem like a never ending cycle of despair and discouragement and being depressed over the state of our life. **God wants better for us and the grace is there to do better.** We can TRULY love Him in this life by keeping His Commandments with ever more integrity, which leads to **a deep peace and joy** interiorly. It leads us to union with the living God the source of all that is True, Good, and Beautiful.

3. **To serve God** - Finally we are called to serve God. Jesus says in the Gospel, *“What does it benefit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process?”* Have we discovered our vocation in life? How God wants us to serve Him? PRAY, PRAY, PRAY and seek out wise spiritual counsel to help in this noble discernment process. At the end of life will we say?: I wish I would have been less obedient to God, or I wish I would have spent less time praying, or I wish I would have been less loving, less self-giving, toward my neighbor? No! We will say the opposite or should say the opposite. Well now is the time to make the change! *Let’s spend more time cultivating our interior life through prayer and study; to be more loving by keeping God’s Commandments and the definitive teaching of our Catholic Church on Faith and Morals in all areas of life; to embrace a life of penance, and to be more self-giving by serving God in our neighbor, esp. the poor, the difficult, and downtrodden.* Don’t be greedy, but generously share our time, talent and treasure with God and others. Aim to give at least 10% of our money away to serve God and neighbor in noble acts of charity. Give for God’s greater honor and glory and for the good of souls, and let’s not squander our time, talent and treasure on vanity and worrying needlessly about the passing things of this world (the cause of most human conflict: money, property and inheritance squabbles, etc.). Think of what is above; what is eternal; rather than the passing things of earth. May we all pray today that God gives us a deeper spiritual sense of reality, so that we will not be spiritually blind. May we live in the world but not be of it. To truly *“grow rich in the things that matter to God”*, and not store up passing treasures for ourselves like the fool in the Gospel today who dropped dead suddenly and had nothing to show for his life! Why were we made? *To eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die?* No! We were made to know God, to love God and to serve God, so that we can be happy with Him forever. *“For eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it dawned on the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him.”* God bless you.

Recommended reading: The 4 Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John & **The Catechism of the Catholic Church.** Reading a page a day of a Gospel and of the Catechism is a good spiritual practice that will take you through both within a year or so - if you are spiritually disciplined. The book *Divine Intimacy* is also excellent.