

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C

August 1, 2010

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Good morning. So today the Lord talks about Qoheleth and everything is vanity. God calling people fools who store up treasure for themselves. Then we deal with the beautiful scripture from Colossians. There are three things I want to deal with today. The first thing is put to death. So we are going to die, get excited. Put to death, seek what is above and then store up, grow rich in what matters to God.

So let us first focus on the first thing put to death. Yesterday I spoke at the Charismatic Conference up in Cleveland, Ohio. Now I know many people don't think I am Charismatic anymore but I still speak at the conferences and I still get them excited and we still do a lot of charismatic things. But I am always the killjoy at the conferences. There are always the people who talk about how God will bless us and oh it is great. You come to the Lord and all good things are going to happen and that is all true. But, the only way to get to those good things is to do what? Die. So, I like to kill everybody at the conferences. It is a nice thing to do like I always like to do to my parishioners. Kill, kill, kill. Die, die, die. The same thing Jesus did. He said, "Put to death whatever is in your life that is earthly." Then He talks about immorality. Then He talks about greed. He talks about all of these things. All these things later hear in the Gospel that build up treasure for ourselves, to build up ourselves, to take care of our needs first. Everything you see, everything you love, everything you know is going to be gone one day, correct? This beautiful building, 2 million dollars the last couple of years, yep it is going to be gone one day. It isn't going to exist. Isn't that sad? Well if this is our treasure. Well guess what, this isn't our treasure. Beautiful, but it is not our treasure. Our treasure has got to be Christ. Our treasure has got to be the things that matter to God. Not the things that matter that are earthly. We have got to take care of the things. We have to take care of our body. We have to take care of your family. We have to do all of those things but they cannot be your treasure. So when God looks at us through the apostle Paul and says, "Put to death those things that are earthly," that is what he is saying.

This morning, I have my bible next to my bed stand so when I wake up, pray to the Holy Spirit, speak to my heart your Word and the Word the Lord gave me this morning first thing fits perfectly with the readings today. It came from John, and it is the day we deal on TEC, it is Friday of TEC. And it says, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a grain. But, if it dies it bears much fruit." So the only way we can do anything is to first die and then the fruit of God will be given to us. But we have got to go through that cross first. There is no way to do anything in Christianity unless we go through the cross. Someone came up from Greensburg to drive up with me to drive back because they wanted to pick my brain for a couple of hours. As we were talking he says, "Isn't that the way it is always suppose to be Father? That what I got to do is die first." "Yes." It is not what we want it is what we struggle against. But, once we do it, then we come fully alive. We need to be people that deal with sin in our life and that is the first thing he is asking us to kill. Kill it! Put it to death.

You all remember the story don't you in C.S. Lewis's book the Great Divorce. Here is a man who struggles with lust his whole life. And lust appears as a demon. This demon is on this man's shoulder. And this demon has this chain around the man's neck and he tugs it and makes him do all this horrible

things. The man is horrified. He hates himself. He hates all of this stuff the demon has made him do in lust. So he keeps crying out to God, crying out to God. Finally God sends an angel to the man. The angel says, "What can I do for you." He said, "This demon of lust makes me do all these things. I am so ashamed. I am horrible. It is just horrible this demon of lust. All of these things it makes me do." The angel looks at him and says, "May I kill it?" "Oh, I don't know if you want to kill it. Maybe you could wound it a little bit. Take the chain off." There is a part of us that like those little demons that we have in our lives. "Well let's not get rid of it completely." And he says, "May I kill it?" And the guy says, "It is not very politically correct you know killing things now. I don't know if you really want to kill it." The angel says, "May I kill it?" And finally the man says, "Yes, yes. Kill it." And the angel reaches up and takes the demon of lust and he crushes it. As he crushes the demon of lust, the demon of lust is transformed and becomes a beautiful white stallion. And the man jumps on the stallion and the stallion takes him home to heaven.

So what is it in your life that you and God must kill? What is it? Some people say, "Father I am a pretty good person except for this or except for that." You do realize only one little thread, one little itty, bitty tiny thread, keeps a bird from flying if you tie the thread on the birds foot. One thread will keep the bird from flying, the same with our spiritual life. If there is any sin in our spiritual life that we are comfortable with, it is okay. Everybody does it. Whatever it is gossip, lust, greed, idolatry, fill in the blank, that one thing that you don't want to kill, is that thing that will keep you from giving God glory and growing in the spiritual life. So the first thing that you and I are called today is to take account of our things that are still of the earth. Those sins that we like and give God permission and work with God to kill it. Put to death those things in our life that keeps us from growing.

The second thing we have got to do as we look at the Second Reading it says, "Seek what is above." And to seek what is above is to seek God's will in our life. So the first thing most of us have to do is kill our own wills. Doing it our way, liking it our way, the first thing that I have got to do. Then we seek what is above – God what do you want? I will do anything that you want. And we give Him permission. It really has got to be an explicit thing. God, I live today to do what You want me to do. Period! Do you start every day that way? Do you start every day seeking what God wants? You know right before the passage I read first this morning was of course is the seed must die. But right before he gets to that, the Apostle's are approached by someone. It says, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." You see what we are called to do is to show Jesus to the world. So when people are looking at you and they are looking at me and they are saying, "Sir or ma'am, we would like to see Jesus." If we are seeking that which is from above and we are seeking God's will in our life, then we will show others Jesus and not ourselves. You do realize whenever we show ourselves whether it is Fr. Larry, or you or anyone listening to this, if we show people ourselves we do them a great disservice. We need to show them Jesus because that is who they want to see.

And finally what it says is we need to grow rich in what matters to God. What do you think, and this will be quite interesting, what do you think is the number one thing that matters to God? It begins with an "L." Love because God is Love. So what we must do before anything else and above all is to seek love because God is love. What heaven is going to be is love. Every time we are seeking God's will it is always about love. Now love will kill you right. Sure. When you get married you die for somebody else. To love means you are going to die. That means you have a generous heart. That means you are more concerned about others than you are for yourself. You are giving your life away day in and day out. If

you and I are giving our life away day in and day out when the time comes when we die it is just another day of giving our life away day in and day out. And as God has blessed us abundantly all the times we have done it God will bless us abundantly with eternal life. What we are going to grow rich in is what we give away, correct. When I do marriages I always ask the couple about the City of Joy and I say, "Did you ever see that movie?" and they always say, "No." I say, "Well you might as well watch it tonight. You have nothing else to do, will you?" They always say, "Father!" At the end of that movie there is that one line that says, "all that is not given is lost." All that is not given is lost. See, if you don't give it away you are building up treasure for yourself and you are going to lose it. I promise you. Everything you don't give away you will lose forever. Promise! Watch! No it won't Father. Yes it will! Trust me. It could burn down. All of your money someone could take it. Whatever it is. Anything you don't give away you could lose forever. But if you give it away you will gain it forever. That is what Jesus said. That is the crux of Christianity. "Those who seek their life will lose it. Those who lose their life for My sake, will find it." That is building up treasure in heaven instead of treasure on earth. Treasure on earth you will lose. Treasure in heaven you get to keep forever. All that is not given is lost. Give it all and receive it all.

Got it? Get it? Going to do it? Good! May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.