

18th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

St. Luke 12:13-21

St. Augustine of Hippo wrote, "Pray as though everything depended on God and work as though everything depended on you." It is a useful maxim that reminds us of the extent to which each of us, by virtue of our baptism, is to have faith and participate in that faith. It is also a useful reminder of the proper orientation of our lives.

Often we will hear people preach that we should not be attached to money, we should not be materialistic, we should not hoard wealth, we should not make idols of our possessions. You have, undoubtedly, heard the proverb, "Money is the root of all evil." In fact, that is a misquote, for what St. Paul actually wrote to St. Timothy was, "The love of money is the root of all evil." Money, in our society, is necessary in order to support even our most basic needs. It is not that money itself is bad. Rather, it is the use of money which is right or wrong.

St. Augustine also said, "All things come from God and must be returned to God." In other words, all that we have, whether material or spiritual, is a gift of God and so properly belongs to God, and how we make use of those gifts, whether they be our talents or our possessions, must be for the glory of God.

Prudence is called the queen or the pilot of all the virtues. Prudence, the ability to judge right actions, should be the guide we employ to determine how we use things. God has given us all, to varying degrees, physical strength. It would be a misuse of my strength to beat-up people who do not do as I want. It would be a proper use of my strength to assist those who are weaker than I am. God has given us all, to varying degrees, money. It would be a misuse of my money to buy drugs or to buy clothes I did not need. It would be a proper use of my money to buy healthy food for my family and to pay for the education of

children or to offer support to others.

Most people invest financially in their future. Some have superannuation funds in which money is invested for the sake of retirement. Many people invest in the share market or in other funds in the hope of increasing wealth. Many people would deem it prudent to save money for times of need or unexpected expenses. Admittedly, not everyone has the means to do these things. However, we all have the means to invest spiritually in our future and in our present. How often, if at all, do we take advantage of the partial and plenary indulgences offered by the Church? Indulgences which are gained simply by certain good deeds and simple prayers but which have the benefit of removing in part or in whole the temporal punishment due for our sins and which, at the time of our death, will deny us Heaven until we have fulfilled for the sake of justice our time in Purgatory. How often do we take advantage of God's unbounded mercy by confessing our sins in the confessional and receiving the abundance of grace that strengthens us in the future for the trials that can cause us to sin? How often do we commend our day to the Lord and our Holy Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that by their grace and our orientation to them we invest our daily undertakings with their blessing? How often do we seek the guardianship and guidance of our guardian angel, our own personal adviser?

All of this is a matter of our orientation to or from God. With minds and hearts apathetic or turned from the Lord then money becomes our be-all and end-all. Possessions determine our value so that the more we have the better we are. With minds and hearts set on the Lord then we shall make good and proper use of those things which we have, recognising that we have a responsibility, even to the extent that we make sacrifices, to care for those in need.

As a matter of prudence make provision for the material well-being of yourself and your family in this life. But as a matter of salvation make provision for the spiritual well-being of yourself and your family for eternal life.