

# Homily For Friday of the 11th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II

## St Peter's 8:30am Mass - June 18, 2022

(Memorial - St. Aloysius Gonzaga)

**2 Kings 11:1-20** "The priest made a covenant between the Lord and the king and people."

**Psalm 132:11-18** "If your sons keep my covenant and my decrees their sons shall sit on your throne."

**Matthew 6:19-23** "Store up treasures in heaven, for where your treasure is there your heart will be."

**Entrance Antiphon:** *The clean of hands and pure of heart shall climb the mountain of the Lord and stand in his holy place.*

**Collect:** *O God, giver of heavenly gifts who, in St Aloysius Gonzaga, joined penitence to a wonderful innocence of life, grant through his merits and intercession that we may imitate him in penitence. .*

### Treasure In Heaven

#### Introduction

If one gets to travel throughout Israel, one is faced at every place the choice people have had to make since God made the heavens and the earth and man and woman to live in it. You can live happily with everything you need in the garden, in perfect intimacy with God. Or, you can try to go after more, as if there was more to get, thinking that you are missing something. The first choice comes from God, who wants our real happiness more than we can want it ourselves. The second one comes from a heart that has been darkened, either by our own refusal to allow light into our soul, or by giving eye and ear to the empty promises of the tempter.

There are always two ways. As happens most days in the scriptures of the day, we get a profound image of the two paths before us. When the world offers us a third way, warning bells should go off in our souls. When it looks like we can be friends with God, yet allow ourselves to desire and build up worldly riches, we are following a path that does not exist and we will fall into destruction.

#### 2 Kings

The scriptures today remind us of God's promises, which are faithful and true. In this strange and convoluted passage from 2 Kings, a Queen Mother is afraid of

losing her own power when her son, the king, dies. She has every family member who could make a claim to the throne killed. She kills off the royal kin and takes over. But God provides for one of her sister's sons to be saved, hidden for six years. In this way, God fulfils the promise we read in the psalm, that the Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back, that one of his sons will always be on the throne.

This covenant promise of God is preserved when it looks the most vulnerable. That's how God works in salvation history and I think it still works that way in our lives. When things look most precarious, God preserves even the tiniest ray of hope. Think of how David's line, from which our Lord the Saviour comes, was that close to being wiped out.

## **Matthew**

In the big picture, God's great plan of salvation for the human race is preserved. However, for each individual person, God's faithfulness can be a gift that is lost. Today the Lord tells us that "the lamp of the body is the eye." Saint Thomas Aquinas understands that, when speaking of the eye, Jesus refers to man's intentions. When the intention is good and holy, directed to God, all our actions are brilliant, resplendent. But when the intention is not upright, how great is the darkness.

We live as if we had come into the world to accumulate wealth and we have no other thought in our minds. Earn money, buy, provide, possess. We deceive ourselves because we are burdened with worries and troubles, and we do not find the happiness we seek. But Jesus makes a different proposal: "Store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal." Heaven is a forever lasting treasure.

We are always invited to be honest with ourselves about where we put our efforts. Certainly, it is proper for a good Christian to make his way in the world, to raise a family, to ensure the future of his own and the peace of mind of his old age, to work also out of a desire to help others. But when I am honest with

myself, it is very easy to forget that in this world, we are just passing through. What we do matters. We are not Gnostics, who emphasize the spiritual over the material. God has given us both. It is in the material world that we are given the opportunity to live out the spiritual, to live as if heaven is a reality now, and to prepare ourselves for the ultimate reality of heavenly existence.

Pope Benedict says it like this: "Jesus invites us to use things unselfishly, without thirsting for possession or dominion, but according to the logic of God, the logic of consideration for others, the logic of love." I like that. There is a logic of God, a way of looking at the world that makes sense. It's not stupid. It's brilliant.

### **St. Aloysius**

Like all the saints, which we are called to be, St. Aloysius came to understand the truth of this approach to life: "It is better to be a child of God than king of the whole world." We also have help in this pursuit. In his work called Meditations on the Holy Angels, the saint offers the suggestion to ask our guardian angels to protect the real treasure which is our happiness:

Our own guardian angel is for each of us like a trustworthy captain commissioned to defend a stronghold against its enemies. Our guardian angel remains alert and watchful lest any foes should capture and occupy the fort of our soul lest the ferocious world of hell should seize upon our poor souls."

### **Call to Conversion**

Jesus says the only security against an uncertain future is our certainty in God. When we put our trust in spiritual goods, we stop worrying about physical goods. If we find ourselves anxious because of ups and downs in the economy, we need to check our hearts. But when we decide to serve only God, there is freedom. The things of the earth are always going to be a temptation. But God doesn't want our material success. He wants true peace and happiness for us, peace that surpasses all understanding.

St. Aloysius died caring for plague victims, even while being forbidden to do so. This is a radical kind of holiness that might seem beyond us. But heavenly treasure

is built up by every effort for the kingdom. Let us ask his intercession for this great pilgrimage toward our heavenly home. St. Aloysius ... Pray for us.