

## *Honeycomb Generosity*

Homily for July 30-31 2022

18<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time

Today the bible readings speak about two kinds of people: the foolish person and the wise person. The foolish person I want to compare with flint, the wise person with the honeycomb. The flint and the honeycomb. To get anything from the flint, you must hammer it. Yet, all you get are chips and sparks. The flint gives nothing away if it can help it, and even then only with a great display. To get anything from the honeycomb one must only take what freely flows from it. It gives its sweetness generously, dripping on all without pressure, without begging or badgering. The honeycomb is a renewable resource. Unlike the flint the honeycomb is connected to life; it is the product of the ongoing work and creative energy of bees. The wise person is like a honeycomb because he or she is continually replenished by our generous God and can grow in living what I am terming “honeycomb generosity”.

The wise person recognizes we are invited by the Holy Spirit to share our lives freely with others. I am sure all of us here want to be wise and to acknowledge that all we have is on loan and our lives are to be a gift to others. It is this theme that is at the heart of our readings today. There are two verses from the psalm that I would like to highlight which elaborate on what it means to be inspired to live a life of honeycomb generosity and so grow in wisdom.

The first verse from today’s psalm is where we prayed the words:

**“So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart”**

To count our days is to realize something that was expressed in the first reading from Ecclesiastes. The main point of this book is the following. If we try to make sense out of life without having God at the centre of our lives, all will be vanity. Now vanity in this sense does not mean someone who is prideful and preoccupied with their looks. We are not talking about glamour magazines like “Vanity Fair”. Rather the word vanity would better be translated “breath”. Meaning that everyone’s life is like a fleeting breath, here one moment and gone the next. Then the author uses a real-life example to illustrate the overarching theme of the book.

Say you have worked and toiled all of your life but if all you have done is worked for your material success as an end but not a means to a greater end, then it is for nothing. It is vanity. Not only that, work is also hard and if it consumes us it will be a vexation, leading to restlessness and worry that is also a vanity.

The psalm states the same thing when contrasting the infinite God with our finite existence.

***To you O God, a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.***

In other words from the perspective of the Eternal One, the earthly life of Jesus happened like two days ago. If that is the case, then indeed our lives, even if we were to live to 100 are like a breath. This is why the psalm says that we are like a dream that is fleeting, or like grass that is green in the morning after the night time dew but by evening has lost its lustre and has withered.

So, when the Psalmist says teach us to number our days, he means that we are to remember that life is a breath, vanity of vanities. When we can gain this perspective then we can apply the last verse of the psalm to our lives as well:

***Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all of our days. Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us and prosper the work of our hands.***

Here the psalmist acknowledges that true satisfaction comes when we live in relation to the steadfast love of God for then the work of our hands can have a deep and significant meaning because it is not an end in itself. Rather it is a means to love and serve the living and eternal God.

This is where there is such a clear connection with today's Gospel. Jesus wants us to remember that life's deepest meaning is not experienced by having lots of stuff. We can be the wealthiest of people, but if we are poor in what really matters, in offering ourselves like a honeycomb in generosity to God and others, then we are very impoverished.

The man in Jesus' story was materially wealthy, as represented by his barns but he was impoverished because his life was governed by this purpose statement:

***I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.<sup>1</sup>***

What matters to this guy is himself. He is going to spend his retirement years living the good life and indifferent to others. He is like flint, no generosity of heart because he has no concept of the infinite love of God by which this man can be drawn out of himself. All that matters to him are the finite things he can control. He was someone who wasn't satisfied with the earthly possessions. In other words, he didn't just get what he needed, he had more than he needed.

***I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods<sup>2</sup>***

He also treated his wealth as if it's all for him. He never even stops to consider whether God has blessed him so that he could bless others.

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition\*](#) (Lk 12:19). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition\*](#) (Lk 12:18). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.

***And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years;*<sup>3</sup>**

And then third and finally, he has no sense of the fleetingness of life. Possessions are going to give him pleasure for a short time, but eventually they're going to slip through his fingers, they're going to be gone and he will have to give an account of them. And this is the final aspect of this that's really important, the idea of the particular judgment.

And here is where the theme of the Gospel ties in with the first reading:

***But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be'*<sup>4</sup>**

By calling him a fool Jesus is meaning that the person in his parable chose to live making only finite investments, and not eternal ones. His flint-like character will not make him ready to enter the honeycomb generosity of heaven. Therefore, Jesus says at the beginning of today's gospel that our life does not consist in the abundance of our possession.

Jesus wants us to realize that the investment that is most important is to be rich towards God, so that the work of our hands can indeed be meaningful and purposeful because we are serving an end greater than ourselves. We are discovering the way of honeycomb generosity.

For here is the point, The only thing you will take with you in the life to come is what you have given away on earth. Such is the call St Paul directs us to when he declares that heaven is to inform how he live on earth because we have already been raised with Christ. And even as Jesus is hidden but truly present in the Eucharist, so too our lives are hidden with Jesus while we live out the breath that is our earthly life.

Therefore we are to put to death all that is flint-like in our lives. "Fornication, evil desire, greed and idolatry", to name just four in St Paul's list. Rather we are to clothe ourselves with the new self because we are living each day growing in our love and knowledge of God and so reflecting the image of our creator by how we live in relation to others.

May we this week pray for a heart that drips with honeycomb generosity and live the breath that is our life rich towards God and a gift to others. By so doing we will be growing as wise men, women, teenagers and children.

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<sup>3</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition\*](#) (Lk 12:19). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.

<sup>4</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition\*](#) (Lk 12:20). (1993). National Council of Churches of Christ.