**“Greed”**

Our three readings today reminds us that greed of all types would lead us to lose sight of what God desires of us. God’s desire for us is that we are convicted of our complete dependency on Him for everything; and not on things He created for our comfort.

In our first reading, we heard Qoheleth talk about vanity or pride which leads to greed, wanting more and more, and hoarding everything around us for me, me only. Qoheleth is telling us to avoid getting wrapped up in ourselves instead, we are to look at the big picture and see to the needs of others who have less than we do.

Our second reading tells us to forget about things that are of the flesh, instead Paul is asking us to always seek what is above, what matters most to God. According to Paul, God has given us the grace to overcome greed he calls idolatry. We have overcome greed through our baptism into Christ who by His resurrection has conquered death and sin that leads to death. It is a new life we have been given in Christ so we can seek what is above.

In our Gospel, to the man who approached Jesus asking Him to tell his brother to give him his share of their inheritance, Jesus told him a parable we heard about, the rich farmer who lacked complete dependence on God. He did not learn that life and our security does not consist of possessions but of being possessed by God.

We are not sure of how the rich foolish man acquired his riches. There is no indication that it was dishonest wealth or that he mistreated his workers on his farm. His mistake was that he saw his vast wealth as of his own making and the source of his happiness. He believed that his wealth gave him absolute security and he did not need God. He was greedy and did not know how to share what God had given him.

We who are here today are mindful of God by seeking what is above. The rich man in the parable was not. However, there is a temptation for all of us to be more like the rich man than we suspect. Sisters and brothers, it is easy for us to have the idea that our relationship with God is based on a spiritual economic system. While the rich man thought his wealth would bring him long life and happiness, we too can think all our good deeds merits God’s favor and a straight ticket to heaven.

While on earth, we have a great wealth from God and we are promised infinitely greater wealth in heaven. But God’s favor is not a reward for our good works. Our good works is what we are supposed to do. Jesus alluded to this when He said **“****So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do’”** (Luke 17:10).

Salvation is God’s free gift to us and not of our own doing. God’s favor is freely given by His own choice and is not a reward for anything we may have accomplished. Heaven cannot be purchased. It is God’s gift to us. Even our desire to do good works come from God. We have to belief that everything good comes from God and without Him we can do nothing. That is one of the things the foolish farmer out of pride and arrogance overlooked.

The man who approached Jesus with a request for a portion of his family inheritance must have come away thinking, wow! I asked the Rabbi for help with my brother! Now I know what matters most to God, compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and charity. These are the best qualities that best reflect God’s nature and we are called to imitate and store up these virtues so we can be with Him in Paradise.

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask Him for more grace to know and do what matters most to God.