

October 21: Using Material Gifts for Mission

Money is useful—even necessary—for many good works, to promote human development, to foster missionary efforts, but when it becomes the dominant thing in life it destroys us and our relationships. This is the lesson that Pope Francis draws from his reflections on today's Gospel parable about the rich man with an abundant harvest, seeking to preserve everything only for himself.

In this parable Jesus teaches us about “our relationship with wealth and money.” Of course, we should not demonize money; it can bring “many achievements to develop humanity.” But it is wrong to use it perversely. Pope Francis confirms Jesus' warning: “Be on your guard against all kinds of greed.” This temptation to “always want more” leads to idolatry. It leads us away from God's Kingdom and mission.

Pope Francis links his Gospel reflection to the words of Saint Paul, who said, “Jesus Christ, who was rich, became poor in order to enrich us.” This is “God's way,” the way of “humility, lowering ourselves to serve.” Since inordinate material attachments lead us away from God, Pope Francis adds that Jesus uses “strong, harsh words against attachment to money.” “You cannot serve two masters: you serve either God or money.” Jesus urges us “not to be worried because the Lord knows what we need.” Or again, he tells us to “trust in the Father, who makes the lilies of the field bloom and gives food to the birds of heaven.”

As Francis explains, when the man was wondering what to do with his abundant harvest, “he could have said: I'll give to someone else to help him.” The Pope asks us to remember that “all the goods we have are given to us by the Lord to help the world go forward, to help humanity go forward, to help others.” Here one finds the true meaning of life: service of others!