



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 31 July 2022

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

In the Gospel of today's liturgy, a man makes this request to Jesus: "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me" (*Lk 12:13*). This is a very common situation. Similar problems are still commonplace. How many brothers and sisters, how many members of the same family, unfortunately quarrel over their inheritance, perhaps no longer speaking to each other!

Responding to the man, Jesus does not get into the details, but goes to the root of the divisions caused by the possession of things. He says clearly: "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness" (v. 15). What is *covetousness*? It is the unbridled greed for possessions, always desiring to be rich. This is an illness that destroys people, because the hunger for possessions creates an addiction. Above all, those who have a lot are never content, they always want more, and only for themselves. But this way, the person is no longer free: he or she is attached to, a slave of, what paradoxically was meant to serve them so as to live freely and serenely. Rather than *being served* by money, the person becomes a *servant* of money. But covetousness is a dangerous illness for society as well — due to covetousness, we have today reached other paradoxes: an injustice never before seen in history, where few have so much and so many have little or nothing. Let's consider wars and conflicts as well. The lust for resources and wealth is almost always involved. How many interests are behind a war! Certainly, one of these is the arms trade. This trade is a scandal to which we must never resign ourselves.

Today, Jesus teaches us that at the heart of all this are not only some who are powerful, or certain economic systems. The covetousness that is *in everyone's heart* is at the centre. And so, let us try to ask ourselves: How is my detachment from possessions, from wealth going? Do I complain about what I lack, or do I know how to be content with what I have? In the name of money or opportunity, am I tempted to sacrifice relationships and sacrifice time with others? And yet again, does it happen that I sacrifice legality and honesty on the altar of covetousness? I said “altar”, the altar of covetousness, but why did I say altar? Because material goods, money, riches, can become a cult, a true and proper idolatry. This is why Jesus warns us with strong words. He says, *you cannot serve two masters*, and — let's be careful — he does not say God and the devil, no, or even the good and the bad, but, *God and wealth* (cf. *Lk 16:13*). One would expect that he would have said that you cannot serve two masters, God and the devil. Instead he says *God and wealth*. That wealth be at our service, yes; to serve wealth, no — that is idolatry, that is an offence to God.

And so, we might think, should no one desire to get rich? Certainly, you can; rather, it is right to want it. It is beautiful to become rich, but *rich according to God!* God is the richest of all. He is rich in compassion, in mercy. His wealth does not impoverish anyone, does not create quarrels and divisions. It is a richness that loves to give, to distribute, to share. Brothers and sisters, accumulating material goods is not enough to live well, for Jesus says also that life does not consist in one's possessions (cf. *Lk 12:15*). It depends, instead, on good relationships — with God, with others, and even with those who have less. So, let us ask ourselves: How do I want to get rich? Do I want to get rich according to God or according to my covetousness? And, returning to the topic of inheritance, what legacy do I want to leave? Money in the bank, material things, or happy people around me, good works that are not forgotten, people that I have helped to grow and mature?

May Our Lady help us understand what the true goods of life are, the ones that last forever.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday morning I came back to Rome after a six-day [Apostolic Journey to Canada](#). I intend to speak about it during the General Audience this coming Wednesday. But now I would like to thank all those who made this penitential pilgrimage possible, beginning with the Civil Authorities, the Chiefs of the Indigenous Peoples, and the Canadian Bishops. I sincerely thank all those who accompanied me with their prayer. Thank you to you all!

Also, during this journey, I did not cease praying for the battered and martyred Ukrainian people, asking God to free them from the scourge of war. If one looked at what is happening objectively,

considering the harm that war brings every day to those people, but also to the entire world, the only reasonable thing to do would be to stop and negotiate. May wisdom inspire concrete steps toward peace.

I extend my greeting to you, people from Rome and pilgrims. A special greeting goes to the novices of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians who are about to make their first religious profession; the group of Catholic Action from Barletta; the young people from the Diocese of Verona; the boys and girls of *Unità pastorale "Pieve di Scandiano"*; and those with the "Gonzaga" group from Carimate, Montesolaro, Figino and Novedrate who have walked the Via Francigena.

On the feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, I extend a heartfelt greeting to my fellow Jesuits. Continue to walk zealously and joyfully in service of the Lord. Be courageous!

I wish all of you a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch and *arrive-derci* !