

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

O that today you would listen to his voice! *Psalm*

There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything. *Second Reading*

A person's life is not made secure by what they own. *Gospel*

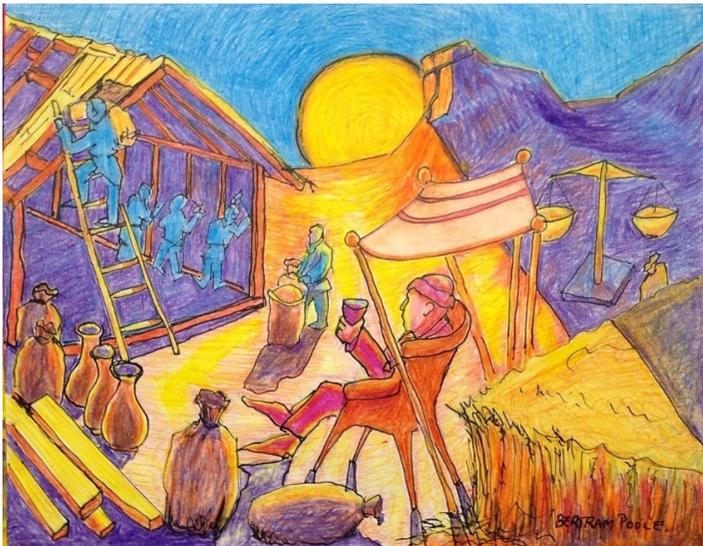
God our Father, gifts without measure
flow from your goodness to bring us your peace.

Our life is your gift.

Guide our life's journey, for only your love makes us whole.
Keep us strong in your love.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:
Eccl. 1: 2, 2: 21–23; Ps. 89 (90) / 94 (95); Col. 3:1–5. 9–11; Luke 12:13–21



© Bertram Poole, 'The Parable of the Rich Fool'
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'Take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time!'

But God said to him: 'Fool! This very night the demand will be made
for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?'

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ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year C, 31st July 2022

There is more to life
than wealth and riches

Today's readings are about material things and our attitude towards them. Are they at the centre of our lives? The texts also suggest that what we *are* is more important than what we *have*.

Qoheleth, 'the Preacher', who wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes 300 years before Christ, gives a pessimistic view of the world. Is it worth working hard and worrying about our wealth, since we have to leave it to others after our death? He declares: 'All is vanity!' (**First Reading**)

The Gospel develops the same theme. The main problem with wealth is that it risks taking centre stage in our life, and displacing God from his rightful position. What really matters is making ourselves rich in the sight of God.

St Paul, in the **Second Reading**, develops similar ideas. As Christians, we should put aside our former preoccupations – in particular greed – and turn our thoughts to '*heavenly things*', for Christ is '*in everything*'.

As the **Psalm** encourages us, we ought to praise and thank the Lord in word and song rather than grumble and worry. We should listen to his voice *today*.

This week, I might want to make some time each day to listen to what the Lord is telling me about myself, and about my relationship with others and with money. I also pray for peace in the world.



Opening Prayer

Draw near to your servants, O Lord,
and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness, that,
for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide,
you may restore what you have created
and keep safe what you have restored.

First Reading Ecclesiastes: 1: 2; 2: 21–23

Vanity of vanities, the Preacher says. Vanity of vanities.
All is vanity!

For so it is that the person who has laboured wisely, skilfully and successfully must leave what is their own to someone who has not toiled for it at all. This, too, is vanity and great injustice; for what do they gain for all the toil and strain that they have undergone under the sun? What of all their laborious days, their cares of office, their restless nights? This, too, is vanity.

As I come to pray, my mind may be full of all that's happened to me so far today: the good moments, the anxious ones too. Without rushing, I take a few deep breaths and then settle into my normal rhythm of breathing, aware of the air going in and out of my lungs.

This is the air you give me to keep me alive, Lord.

In time, when I feel my mind has calmed, I read the short text above.

What is my immediate reaction?

Maybe I read it again, lingering on the key word, *Vanity*.

What does it mean to me? Is it a word I use often, perhaps in connection with people I know? I reflect on times when I've used that word, and tell the Lord what is in my mind.

Perhaps I realise that the writer is using the word in a slightly different way here: it is not so much about being self-centred or conceited, as being involved in something pointless or futile.

In what ways could these words describe my regular activities?

I pause, and again tell the Lord how I feel. If needs be, I ask him for guidance or explanation.

This might lead me to re-assess what I do. In general terms, what are the motivations which guide my actions: the greater good of all ... or my own gratification ... or...?

Perhaps as I reflect over the past years in my life, I notice how I have approached things differently. Who or what has led to this change?

When the time comes to end my prayer, I thank the Lord for being with me and for listening to me. *Glory be ...*

Gospel Luke 12: 13–21

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance.' 'My friend,' he replied, 'who appointed me your judge, or arbiter of your claims?' Then he said to them, 'Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a person's life is not made secure by what they own, even when they have more than they need.'

Then he told them a parable: 'There once was a rich man who having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, "What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I will do; I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time." But God said to him, 'Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?' So it is when a person stores up treasure for themselves in place of making themselves rich in the sight of God.'

I settle myself ... perhaps in front of a candle or a cross. I may repeat a favourite phrase, or close my eyes. 'What will you show me today, Lord?'

I read the passage from Luke's Gospel. It may be familiar, yet I try to approach it as if for the first time. What strikes me? Maybe there is a phrase I have not 'heard' before.

A man is asking Jesus to settle a dispute within his family. I pause.

Can I see parallels between this situation and my own?

Have I ever asked the Lord to take sides in a conflict around me?

I speak to the Lord, honestly, telling him what is in my heart. I listen.

Perhaps I am drawn to reflect on the parable that follows.

How much does wealth matter to me?

What are my own riches, material and spiritual?

How much do I share them with others?

I consider how everything – wealth or poverty, success or failure – has the potential to lead me to respond more fully to God's love for me.

If it feels right, I ask for the grace to lead a life which will make me rich in the sight of God.

When I am ready, I go forward 'In the name of the Father ...'