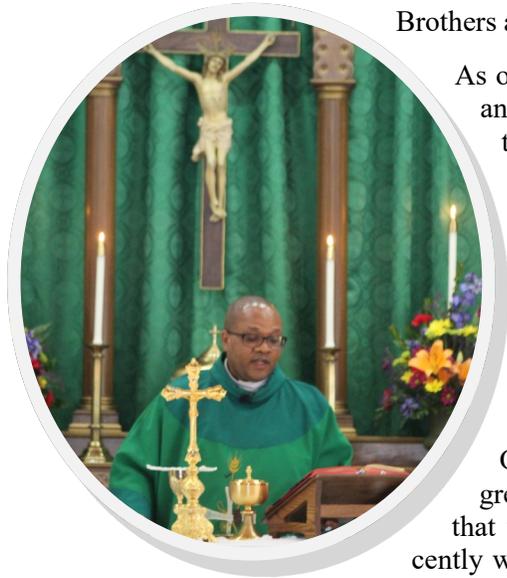


# FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Grace and peace!



As one coming from a culture where the distinction between the rich and the poor is so glaring, I can relate to the words of our Lord in the Gospel reading today. I have observed the utter misery of those who hoard their wealth and treasures; conversely, I have witnessed the joys that the materially poor can experience, as they are more likely to rely upon their relationship with God, opening their hearts and sharing their gifts. In this weekend's liturgy, Jesus summons us to ponder and pray about our God-given resources. All of our readings directly address greed, wealth, and power implicitly and we are called to set our heart on what really matters.

Our first lyrical reading on *Vanity* from Ecclesiastes warns us that greed, selfish acquisition, and the hoarding of goods are useless ... that when the hoarder dies, he goes to eternity empty-handed. I recently watched a YouTube of a contemporary *Ecclesiastical* young lady

standing in a cemetery filled with gravestones, speaking to all: "Whoever you are, you will end up here whether you like it or not. Life is vanity, be calm, forgive and be happy. Life is vanity" In the Second Reading, St. Paul encourages Christians to instead embrace lasting, heavenly treasures and warns against earthly greed, which leads to worship of yet another god.

In the Gospel, Our Lord uses the parable of the "rich fool" to warn us against all types of greed. How profound, since greed takes our life's focus *away* from God, away from serving and loving Him. It must have come as quite a shock to the rich man to be reminded that life on earth is God's gift to us and he can take it away whenever he wants: planning to tear down old barns to build himself new and better ones, forgetting that his wealth was on loan to him by God -- for sharing with his neighbor. He might have used his wealth to provide worthwhile employment for others rather than planing to increase his own welfare.

Today's liturgy is an invitation for us to examine our abundant blessings, probing our hearts for ways that we can share those blessings with others. Knowing how limited our time on earth can be, each of us must face the question put to the rich fool: What are my hopes for the life hereafter? Let us be very clear on this, that Jesus is not against *acquisition* of, but the hoarding of wealth. We can therefore open our hearts and be generous in offering our time, living more simply, striving to put to death the parts of us that are earthly, striving to be holy.

Most importantly, I want you all to know we are all rich not only in material goods, but with intelligence, good will, a sense of humor, the ability to console, encourage, inspire, support, and help others. Let us therefore, not hoard our smiles, our visits, and our presence to others within our life journey. This kind of hoarding shuts us off from God, narrowing our concerns to just ourselves, and most of all, offending God. Therefore, consider the Sacrament of Reconciliation as you examine what God wants from you in invitation to the hereafter.

In this, a Christian consists, that he gets rid of the earthly and puts on the heavenly man.' Pope St. Leo the Great.

Joyous Sunday!