

## **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Gospel Reading** *Luke 12: 13-21*

**A person's life does not consist of possessions.**

### **Reflection on the Gospel Reading**

In Chapter 12 of Luke's Gospel, Jesus instructs his disciples and the crowd on how to be ready for the coming judgment. A crowd of many thousands has gathered to hear Jesus. At first he speaks only to the disciples, reminding them that it is not persecution they should fear but the judgment that is coming for all who do not acknowledge the Son of Man. Suddenly a man in the crowd shouts out to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." He seems to have grown tired of Jesus speaking only to the disciples. Jesus offers the man no help. Instead he uses the question to teach what, in light of the coming judgment, life really consist of.

Jesus tells the crowd a parable. A rich man's lands have yielded more crops than expected. His response is not to consider how he might share all the extra food with others but to wonder how he can possibly store it all. He has what he thinks is a brilliant idea: to tear down his present barns and build larger ones. Then he will have many things stored up for years of eating, drinking, and making merry.

"You fool" is God's response to this man because that very night his life will be taken away. To whom will everything belong then, God asks. The rich man's world is small, just him and his possessions, and

now he learns that he is to lose his life. What good are his possessions now? Jesus states the moral of the story. This is how it will be for everyone who stores up treasure for himself or herself but is not rich in what matters to God. Centuries later St. Gregory the Great taught that when we care for the needs of the poor, we are giving them what is theirs, not ours. We are not just performing works of mercy; we are paying a debt of justice. Life does not consist in possessions but in sharing what we possess with others. The goods of the earth have been given to everyone.

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