

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jun 21st 2013

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.

But store up treasures in heaven...For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

Not seeking and storing treasures on earth is a countercultural idea in today's world obsessed with not just buying but hoarding the newest, showiest and best treasures. Our valuable time spent distracted on the material world is time lost in God's eyes. We are distracted by the comfort and pleasure that we find in this world. We are distracted from the needs and concerns of our neighbors because of our own desire to be ever more prepared or ever more comfortable. These treasures may bring fleeting happiness, but never the joy or consolation we seek that only comes from God.

Fr. Pat Malone, SJ introduced me to the following quote from St. Basil while on an immersion trip in the Dominican Republic with the Creighton Law School, "The bread which you do not use is the bread of the hungry; the garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of him who is naked; the shoes that you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot; the money that you keep locked away is the money of the poor; the acts of charity that you do not perform are so many injustices that you commit." This quote speaks to me as another motivation to not 'store up' things for personal use, but rather the realization that we are all part of the human family. We need the community and support of all.

Today is the feast day of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga. He was a Jesuit who likely took St. Basil's words quite literally, as it seems he took all in his life. Commentary about St. Aloysius says that he was very serious, that he was scolded and asked to moderate his asceticism in order to be able to be more social with the other novices at his time. (Foley, O.F.M., Leonard. Saint of the Day.

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Saints/saint.aspx?id=1421>) As a young man who lived a brief but powerful life, he gave us a great example of what it means to take today's gospel seriously. He gave himself fully to the care of others, to the service of the church. As a person who left the worldly treasures offered to him to be a missionary he shows us a path to developing strong habits of the heart.

Time spent cultivating good habits of the heart, living our call and God's commandments is time spent storing up treasure in heaven. "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." That is really beautiful. This sounds like the peace and joy of knowing that we are who we are called to be and the freedom to be generous with God's gifts. Aristotle said, "you are what you repeatedly do." Today's gospel says, "if your eye is sound, your whole body will be filled with light." If we can practice this each day we can surely get our heart into the kind of shape God longs for.

Kelly Tadeo Orbik