

The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
Luke 12:16-21

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (KJV)

The believer's soul is of utmost importance. The soul requires constant care, protection and nourishment. God's Holy Church provides for the soul's nourishment and offers the ways for protection and care.

The Church's Divine services, teachings and the Holy Mysteries nourish and strengthen the soul. Believers unite and grow with Christ in the Church. Christ's mercy, love and forgiveness are present in the Church.

The believer's heart, mind and soul determine daily interests and pursuits. Charitable interests and actions reveal the content of the heart, mind and soul. The present Gospel connects the heart, mind and soul with charitable works.

Charitable works and interests are evidence of the believer's love and care for other persons in daily life. Love and care for neighbors and for people in daily life, are essential for living the Christian life.

The rich man in the present Gospel focused exclusively on himself. The rich man's selfishness was apparent in his desire to build bigger storage for the abundant crops.

The rich man showed no interest in sharing his abundance with other persons in need. The coldness and hardness of the rich man's heart were reflected in his selfish interests. The rich man's soul was put in peril.

Knowledge of abundance in his life did not delay the rich man's soul being required of him. The man was going to depart this life without showing love and care for his neighbors. His selfishness was denying great benefit to his soul.

The Gospel is very clear about showing love toward others in need. St. Matthew's Gospel equates the care of the needy with the direct experience with Jesus Christ. (Mt. 25:31-46)

The Nativity Fast is underway. This is a time for heightened awareness of neighbors in need. Now is the time to act with love and care for the needy in the parish and in the community.

The needs of parishioners and neighbors in the community include but are not limited to material assistance. A word of support, a visit or phone call will lift the spirits of individuals struggling with daily challenges.

All believers have the time of life. Putting the time of life to use for the benefit of the parish or as a volunteer in programs serving the needy are ways to express love for Jesus Christ.

Sharing the love of Christ extends to reaching out to the jails, prisons, and hospitals in the community. Personal care homes, rehab centers and nursing home residents benefit from believers coming to share the love of Jesus Christ.

The present Gospel focuses great attention on the soul and the fragility of earthly life. Showing love and concern for others directly benefits the soul. The Gospel serves as a constant guide to nourish and guide the believer.

The time of Jesus Christ's return and the Great and Final Judgment is not known. The exact moment when a believer will depart this life is not known. Each moment of life filled with the love of Jesus Christ benefits the soul

Every person has a certain abundance to share with others. The Nativity Fast is a time for self-reflection and evaluation about the condition of the heart, mind and soul. Growing in Christ is accelerated when the Fast is honored and used wisely.

Being concerned only with increasing one's personal wealth is contrary to the present Gospel reading. The Church provides the Gospel for believers to take the reading to heart and apply it to daily life.

Parish outreach programs to the needy benefit the parish and the recipients of the outreach. Believers showing love and charity in their daily lives are caring for their souls.

Eternal life and God's Kingdom are embraced as goals at Holy Baptism. The way a believer uses personal time, wealth and talents determines the direction, goals and outcome of life.

Each moment of life is precious and only comes once. The use of each moment of life affects the care and nourishment of the soul. The Gospel is clear in saying the soul is more valuable than the whole world. (Mt.18:26, Mk.8:36)

Love of God and love of neighbor are constant expectations for believers. Caring for the soul involves love of God and love of neighbors. Thank God for the present Gospel heightening awareness of life's fragility and caring for the soul.

The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost Holy Gregory Decapolities.

Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple. November 20/December 3, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic