

XVIII ORDINARY TIME – August 4th, 2013

**THE THINGS YOU HAVE PREPARED, WHOSE WILL THEY BE? - Biblical
Commentary by F. Alberto Maggi OSM**

Lk 12.13-21

At that time, someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?"

And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'

And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

While Jesus is speaking of trusting the Father, he is interrupted by those who only trust money. Jesus says that true security is in God and there are here some who only feel secure through his possessions. Let's comment Luke's Gospel, then.

"Someone in the crowd said to him, «Master»"and the verb is imperative, "«tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me»". So the problem is the usual old question of dividing the inheritance. But Jesus refuses. According to him every inheritance is the result of greed and covetousness, attitudes that separate man from God. So Jesus answers "« Man, who made me a judge or arbidrator ...»" - it is the same answer to the verb of the question "divide the inheritance with me" – "«... over you?»".

Then he addresses to his disciples. Jesus refuses to act as mediator in matter of inheritance or interest and warns his disciples with these words quite severe. . *“But he said to him, «Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness»”*.

Jesus is very severe in warning against greed and accumulation of possessions. Why? Jesus says: *“«One’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions»”*. And the evangelist here three times uses expressions recalling having, covetousness, abundance and possessions.

One’s life does not depend upon what he owns, but what he gives. *“And e told them a parable, saying, «The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself»”*. Pay attention on this verb ‘thinking to himself’ as Jesus will ridicule it. This rich man seems to argue, but how does he? A rich always thinks about himself, thinks that everything is due to him. He never considers to give or at least to share with others, using this abundance also for helping others.

“«What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?»” So this is his arguing, *“I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods»”*.

Here again this obsession of goods, all what one owns. *“«And I will say to my soul, Soul»”*, representing the same individual, *“«You have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry»”*.

So this person only cares about himself, his advantage and his interest. Here comes a surprise, which is greater because of the cultural background of that time, where richness was thought to be a divine blessing. But the God of Jesus is completely different.

“But God said to him, «Fool!»” The rich was called fool even if he was supposed to be arguing. So the thoughts of this rich are those of a silly man. *“«Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?»”*

So all his toil, all his possessions, all his longing ... and so what? The expression ‘fool’ has already been used by Jesus when addressing to Pharisees regarding their acting for their own interest, and even if they seem clean, *“they are filled with robbery and iniquity”*.

The warning is for this category of religious people who are at the same time also attached to money, between one psalm and another the exercise of managing the cash is something that pious persons are very good at.

And then comes the final warning from Jesus, *“«So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God»”*. The treasure is trusting the Father and voluntarily devoting one’s life – what one has and what one is – to others. We already saw the conclusion.