
WE BEAR A PRECIOUS TREASURE



had the pleasure of presiding the Sunday Eucharist at the 26th Foire Brayonne festival and the centennial of the parish of Saint-André. Following are excerpts from the homily I gave.

“WHAT’S IT GIVE?”

“What profit comes to a man from all the toil and anxiety of heart with which he has laboured under the sun? All his days sorrow and grief are his occupation; even at night his heart is not at rest” (Eccl. 2:22-23). These words of Scripture still affect us today. The Québec comedian Yvon Deschamps echoes these sentiments in one of his monologues, *‘Qu’ossa donne?’* [‘What’s It Give?’] “What’s it give to work so hard when you can lose it all overnight? What’s it give to gather so much, to scrimp and save, when you can lose everything on the stock market? What’s it give to build yourself a castle when a major fire can destroy it all? What’s it give to spend hour after hour in beauty treatments when you know that life can be snuffed out in an instant? What’s it give to learn and make plans when a catastrophe such as an earthquake can destroy everything in a few seconds?” The poets write of the fragility of life. And Ecclesiastes reminds us that all is vanity. “Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!” (Eccl. 1:1) There are times when we would tend to agree. “There was a rich man who had a good harvest. ‘I know,’ he said. ‘I will pull down my grain bins and build larger ones. All my grain and my goods will go there.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life shall be required of you’ (Lk. 12:16-18, 20). Isn’t there anything in the world that is solid and worth living for? Do we have a treasure hid deep within us, which we do not dare show others or share with them? Yes, we really bear a precious treasure in a fragile vessel moulded of the clay which is our bodies, the golden treasure of the Gospel.

86,400 DOLLARS

I recently got an email on the subject of life. This is what it said: “Life is short. Imagine that each morning your bank opens an account in your name for \$86,400.00 which you can draw from every day, to buy what you like. There are only two laws to follow. First: any balance left at the end of the day will be lost. You cannot cheat; you cannot deposit the balance into another account, all you can do is spend it... However, each new day a new account is opened in your name for \$86,400.00, for the day’s expenses. The second rule is: The bank can end this game at any time without any advance notice; it can tell you that it is finished, that your account is closed and there will be no other account opened. What would you do? I believe that you would spend every dollar you had in a way pleasing to you. Well, we all have this magic bank, and it is the Bank of Time! Each morning upon waking we are credited 86,400 seconds of life for the day, and when we go off to sleep, at night, none of these seconds are credited to the following day. What has not been lived the day before is lost... yesterday is gone. And every day, this magic starts over again. We play with the inescapable rule that the bank can close our account at any moment without prior warning: life can end at any moment. So, what do we do of these 86,400 seconds that make the day? Life is short, even for those who complain that it is long... so, take advantage of it! Become aware of it! We all bear a precious treasure in us, and that treasure is life.

CHRIST IS EVERYTHING IN ALL OF YOU

In writing to the Colossians, Saint Paul says: “Put to death whatever in your nature is rooted in earth. Put aside your old self with its past deeds, and put on a new man, one who grows in knowledge as he is formed anew in the image of the Creator” (Col. 3:5, 9b-10). To the disciple, there is only Christ who counts, now. “There is no Greek or Jew, here, circumcised or uncircumcised, foreigner, slave, or freeman. Rather, Christ is everything in all of you” (3:11). It is in this context that Paul gives us valuable advice: “Since you have been raised up in company with Christ, set your heart on what pertains to higher realms where Christ is seated at

God's right hand. Be intent on things above rather than on things of earth. After all, you have died! Your life is hidden now with Christ in God. When Christ our life appears, then you will appear with him in glory" (3:1-2).

GOSPEL TREASURE

What great good news the Sunday liturgy tells us, and what treasure it helps us discover. "Christ is everything in everyone." This was the motto of the late Bishop Fernand Lacroix: his aim was to centre all his life and ministry on Christ. The priest-poet Robert Lebel describes this treasure in this way: "Treasure of faith and hope, whose richness surprises us, treasure of life and presence which surpasses us infinitely. Treasure for a world seeking and not knowing how to reach to the very roots of its being, to seek rebirth and discover you. Treasure that is uncovered to the eyes of the poor as soon as your voice is heard; but is our voice, one among so many, truly an echo of yours? Treasure filled with your promises! But to discover it we must let go of our wisdom and let you inhabit us. Treasure lost in our weaknesses where your strength is displayed. Treasure of a Love which prompts us to live for none but you. Treasure buried in the silence where old words no longer go. On oceans of indifference where our ship has battled."

WE ARE PRECIOUS

We who have faith, hope, and love are the richest people in the world who could be the most sought-after millionaires, if we only knew of the treasure we carry in us. No amount of money can buy this treasure we bear. Scripture says that one who offered all his riches to buy love would be held in contempt. The same holds true for faith and hope which cannot be bought, either, for whatever price. You who were baptised and confirmed, you who have been ordained, you are precious in the eyes of the Lord, and he loves you. You all bear in you a treasure of faith, hope, and charity. You are a priceless treasure!

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« From A Bishop's Journal » (552) (03 August 2004)