

Spiritual Commentary on the Gospel Readings of the Days of the Great Lent by Father Louka Sidarous (8)

First Sunday of the Great Lent

The Gospel according to St. Matthew (6:19-33)

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

My Lord... When will I be freed from the heavy infirmity... It is the self that hides behind what it owns and embraces what it has and is puffed up with possessions... Lie followed by another lie... And within a moment leaves the world, and what it thought was secure and trustworthy becomes ashes and vapor.

But everyone walks behind this mirage, this trickery, and this big lie that rules over the whole world. He who possesses Christ renounces every other ownership. Therefore what is deficient is to become poor in the life with Christ... So one tries to fill his hunger with eating the pods of swine. He who has Jesus lets go of the whole world. And all that is in the world shall pass away.

Richness are not certain, meaning it is not true. Only God's richness is sufficient... Richness in charitable deeds... seizing opportunities that will not be repeated, that I have something and so I give and therefore I gain riches.

Selfishness robs us from enjoying Christ... Selfishness is a circle closed upon itself... once it is broken it enriches and extends wide.

The treasures of the earth are dust no matter how grand... The glory of the earth is passing, and this is the evident truth... My existence on the earth is like fiction... Why then don't I use the few days I have

here in work and giving and generosity... If I will leave everything then why the stinginess? Give and give within one's capacity and above my capacity.

The boat, if it has lightened its capacity, floats on the surface of the water and becomes secure from sinking... The money of the world is a source of greed, fraud and wars and disputes and hatred and death.... Every impure trade has money behind it... Truly the world has been placed in the hands of evil... The prince of this world and the spirit of darkness, he controls the money of the world to direct it towards one purpose, which is destruction and trickery of souls to bring them to Hell. For he is against God.

How miserable is the life that deviates to serve that master...

How wretched is the life of running behind that liar...

No one can serve Christ and serve against Christ...

Let me hold on to You only, Lord... To love You and dislike this other deceiver ...

Obey You and disobey this other liar... Honor You and dishonor this other devil...

Follow You so I do not follow this other one to hell...

My master, You have spared Your followers the worry of what is in the world and promised that when they follow You without a money bag or sack or staff for the road... You become for them Bread, Provision for the road, Safety and Security of arrival, so they lack nothing.

What will I gain with the treasures of the earth? If I have directed my face towards the heavenly Jerusalem... The heart is the scale, if it leans towards the world it seeks to have its treasure, and if it is preoccupied with the earthly, it is near impossible that it beholds the heavenly in prayer or fasting, or... Thus these rituals become outwardly, bodily, but the heart is far from the practice.

When does my heart become preoccupied with "whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report" (Phil 4:8), and whatever is heavenly.

Then my Master, I will strive to make every treasure I own in heaven.... This becomes like the savings of a lifetime... everything that is earthly can be converted to heavenly, if one desires to make friends in the everlasting tents.

Converting the earthly to heavenly is an art of the Spiritual arts, the righteous Saints have mastered it: Time changed, money changed, emotions changed, possessions changed, and all abilities changed... Everything changed to serve the heavenly glory, for their love of Jesus Christ.

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