

## Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022

My dear brothers and Sisters, you may have read that in ancient times, the wealth of Croesus was legendary. Midas has so much money that a legend grew up that all he touched turned to gold. Today, I suppose, we would talk of Elon Musk as a modern legend of wealth. Someday, he will have as much as Croesus and Midas have - nothing. You and I will have the same amount. With this in mind, let us discuss the effects of:

“GREED!!”

That simple fact is what makes greed so foolish. It is the reason that in the parable, God calls the rich man, “You Fool!” Jesus warned us that “One’s possessions do not guarantee life.” In the Gospel today, greed is for wealth. The man who approached Jesus wanted his share of an inheritance. The man in the parable wanted “the good life,” a life of physical comfort and ease.

But, there are other things for which we can be greedy. In fact, greed for money and goods may be less destructive of my humanity than some other greedy desires. I want to look good, both physically and socially. That’s not wrong in itself, but if I am willing to sacrifice health and common sense to that desire, something is definitely wrong. I want status, I want to win at all cost, I want recognition, I want special treatment, I want it ALL. But Jesus Says, “avoid greed in all its forms.”

The 18th Century English poet Matthew Green wrote of “Avarice, the sphincter of the heart,” Sphincters are muscles that close off openings in the body. They squeeze shut so that nothing can get out. That is what greed does to me. It squeezes my heart shut. When I act out of greed, I act for myself. At the very worst, I destroy them on my way to what I want. My heart is so squeezed that no love can get out. Or in. The Lord is upset by greed because it deprives us of true godliness.

There are many ways in which I can be godlike in my own minor way. I can create, I can think But, most of all, I can love. Greed squeezes shut my ability to love God or others. When I am busy grabbing what I can get or holding on to what I have gotten, my hands are not free to give, nor are they open to receive. “Avoid greed in all its forms, because one’s possessions do not guarantee life”

The love of God guarantees life. Might it be that I am greedy because deep down I am not yet ready to rely upon the love of God? Do I really believe that this world is the whole story? If this world is all there be, then greed is a way of trying to guarantee my life.

My dear brothers and sisters, no matter how much of my greed is satisfied, my life will end. My possessions are like blindfold, hiding death from me. But they will not hide me from death. It will come and I will have nothing. Now I know that greed puts barrier between me and God, myself and others, even though I need it as proof that my life is real, that it has value, even if measured by transitory standards of gold and glory.

Now, what can I do? The remedy is, according to African Ancestors’ wise words, “ When I genuinely accept death as truly the entrance to a new, deeper experience of God’s life giving love, then I can live without greed. I can allow death to kill my greed before either greed or death kills me.”

Thank you for listening and have peace filled week, and May the intercession of our mother Mary protect you and your families, Amen.

With love and prayers,  
Father Nicholas NWANZI.