

Homily for August 12, 2001  
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle C

By Father Charles Bowes

Wisdom 18:6-9  
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19  
Luke 12:32-48

## *Only God can save us from uncertainty.*

We seek security. We look for freedom from death. We try to minimize surprise; confine the unexpected to acceptable limits.

So today's gospel makes us feel quite insecure, uncertain. What a recipe for disaster, Jesus gives: "Sell what you have; Give it away," says Jesus. And we answer, "How can you live, raise a family without food, clothing, or shelter? Besides, what's so secure about meaningful relationships, great ideals, and fulfillment of our creative potential?" Spiritual things, however worthy, are still among treasures of earth. We can take disastrous and inhuman refuge in religion just as surely as we can escape into material things. Spiritual things too are vulnerable to loss, decay, and betrayal.

Uncertainty, the threat of death, lies in both the spiritual and the material.

So what's a person to do? How does one cope?

We cope with uncertainty, not by running from it, but by facing it squarely. We handle uncertainty not by avoiding either the material or the spiritual, but by seeing and feeling our escape into each. When we gaze upon the crucified, we see what our search for security does to us. The figure on the cross is not just Jesus, but

the figure on the cross is also us, you and I, suspended between heaven and earth - you and I hanging between the material and the spiritual, with nowhere to go but to receive new life as God's gift.

Necessarily will we grasp onto the material and the spiritual, first one, then the other. Earthly treasures are part of being human. Earthly treasures, spiritual and material, we shall ever use to keep death in check - and ever shall we find them wanting.

God loves us for that too. God understands and accepts and raises us right where we're scared. Today's readings tell us its okay to cope with uncertainty by using material and spiritual things - for neither will ever satisfy our searching hearts.

So come to communion, seeking, searching for an end to uncertainty. And discover in broken bread and outpoured wine a security found only by owning and facing that of which we are afraid. A famous lady handled life's uncertainty in this way: Princess Eugenia of Sweden some years ago sold all of her diamonds and used the money to build a hospital for the poor. After the hospital was functioning, a very sick woman was brought in from the streets. Her heart was filled with hate and rebellion, and her lips were filled with curses. Nevertheless, the hospital staff not only gave

her excellent medical care but also tender, loving care. After several days had passed, those who came to her bedside could see a whole new attitude toward her illness and toward life beginning to emerge. Princess Eugenia went to the hospital and visited a while with this woman. When the princess returned home, she said to her husband, "I have at last seen the glitter of my diamonds."

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