

Friday of The Third Week of Great Lent

“Bigger Barns?” (Regnum Christi Meditation for Monday of the Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time by Father Steven Reilly, LC- [Audio Version*](#) Luke 12:13-21)

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.” He replied to him, “Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?” Then he said to the crowd, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.” Then he told them a parable. “There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, ‘What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?’ And he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, ‘Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!’” But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’ Thus, will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.”

Introductory Prayer: O God, I come to you today with all my human frailty. You know me better than I know myself. I am in your presence to accompany and console you, not to seek consolation or a nice feeling for myself. Even if I get distracted during our time together, I offer myself to you completely.

Petition: Lord, give me wisdom to understand what is truly important in this life.

1. **The Scorecard of Life:** Driving down the road, a bumper sticker is often seen: “The one who dies with the most toys wins.” This is a contemporary rendition of the mantra of Jesus’ rich fool: “Eat, drink and be merry.” Juggling credit cards and all kinds of financing schemes, many people live life like the rich fool in today’s Gospel. Is the drive for material pleasure, or security, impoverishing my soul?
2. **A Bigger Barn vs. a Bigger Heart:** What will truly make us happy? Glossy magazine ads are, for some, a source of inspiration on this point. Basically, they are about “bigger barns”: a hotter car, redder lipstick, spectacular vacations. The rich fool believes that by increasing his capacity for material pleasure, he will be happier. But it’s an illusion. Like the running wheel for a

gerbil, it is lots of movement without getting anywhere. We invest energy and effort acquiring things, but the bigger barn brings us little joy. That's because our hearts—not our barns—are what really need to be enlarged. Our heart longs for love. That Augustinian restlessness will never leave us in peace until we have encountered the Lord who loves us and discovered him in the relationships ordained by his providence.

3. **When the Final Curtain Is Drawn:** At the end of this parable, Jesus in essence says, “You can't take it with you.” There's a place in Rome in which this is graphically depicted. The Capuchin church of St Mary of the Immaculate Conception, on Via Veneto, is affectionately known as the “Bone Church.” Inside there is an amazingly designed and arranged display made completely out of the bones of four thousand Capuchin friars! While it may strike at modern sensitivities as somewhat morbid, like today's Gospel it teaches an important lesson. All those bones look alike. Unless you are a forensic expert, you cannot tell who was fat or thin, smart or dull, handsome or homely. Death is the great leveler. Earthly advantages dissolve. Material goods stay in this world. We go to the Lord to render an account of our lives at death. As the little sign on the wall of the Capuchin ossarium says, “One day, we were like you. One day, you will be like us.”

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, so often I find my eyes looking on the good things of this world more as ends than means. I need to keep my priorities straight always: you first and then everything else, inasmuch as they lead me to you. Give me the wisdom to realize that life is short and that it must be lived for you alone.

Resolution: I will live charity today as fervently as if I knew this day were my last.

*The Gospel read in the Maronite Church on Friday of the third week of Lent is from Luke 12:16-21. The above meditation is based on Luke 12:13-21. Below is a second meditation for the Gospel of Luke 12:13-21.

“Love’s Labor Found” (based on Regnum Christi Meditation for Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
- [Audio Version](#) Luke 12:13-21)

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.” He replied to him, “Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?” Then he said to the crowd, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.” Then he told them a parable. “There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, ‘What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?’ And he said, ‘This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, ‘Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!’” But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’ Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God.”

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, I believe you want me to have faith in you, faith that hearkens to your words without any second guessing. I hope in your words, not relying solely on my own strength or reasoning. I love you. You continue to astonish me by showing me that your ways are not my ways.

Petition: Lord, may I love you with all my heart, mind, soul and strength.

1. **Love’s Labor Lost:** “Take care to guard against all greed....” Greed arises when our heart loves material things and possessions in selfish and disordered ways. God created “things” – material reality – for a purpose: to help us fulfill our mission in this life. Our heart can grow to love these things and to love accumulating wealth for its own sake, not for the sake of using it to fulfill our mission and save our soul.
2. **Focused Love:** Jesus has called us to “love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, with all your strength and with all your mind.” But we only have one heart, one soul, one will and one mind. If I love material wealth in a disordered way, then my one heart, one soul, etc. will be divided and pulled in many directions simultaneously. Not only will I not be able to love God with a total, faithful, focused love, I will not be able to love anyone in this way. No matter whom I love, my love will always be weakened and diluted by a divided heart.
3. **Late Have I Loved...** “Late have I loved You, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved You. You were within me, and I looked outside; I sought you, and miserable as I was, I longed for creatures, I was detained by the wonderful works of your hands” (St. Augustine, Confessions). What dilutes my love is disordered affection for the things God created. Our heart is capable of loving multiple persons and things (God, parents, children, friends), but only to the degree it is capable of focusing on one of them. Loving God first is like using a magnifying glass: The rays of sunlight, like the affection and love we have for numerous persons and things, are united by the glass and magnified into a more powerful beam. When we love God first, our love for others and the world increases in intensity.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, you created my heart to love. Often I fall in love with the things you created. I can even begin to love them more than you, to forget that you are their Creator and that you have given them to me to lead me to you. Help me to love you above them all, and to thank and bless you in a thousand ways.

Resolution: Today I will take stock of my loves to make sure they don’t compete with my love for God.