

18th Sunday OT Homily:

Dear brothers and sisters,

As we gather to celebrate the 18th Sunday in ordinary time, we are invited to reflect on a question very deep in every human heart: what truly gives life meaning? We live in a world that chases and values wealth, success, and security, but we know that these do not last forever. Through the readings of this Sunday, God teaches us to let go of greed and live as people of faith, gratitude, and love.

This is the same question that troubled the author of Ecclesiastes, written at the time when the Jewish people were living under foreign rulers and life was hard. **The writer looked at all the toils and struggles of human life and said: “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”** The Hebrew word for vanity is “**Hebel**”, which literally means **breath**, something **fleeting**, **impossible to grasp**, something **that is here** at one moment and **gone** at the next moment. In this reading, the author talks about a person who works hard with wisdom and skill, but when the person dies, all the work is left to someone else, and the person may not even deserve it.

Even in life, there are people who are restless, anxious, and unable to sleep, and it all feels meaningless. This was the question for people at that time too. They saw kings build great cities and temples, but after some time, everything fell apart. This reading reminds us that our hard work and achievement do not last forever. The reading is teaching us to see that we are not in control, and life under the sun is short, reminding us that **LIFE IS A GIFT TO BE RECEIVED, NOT A PROJECT TO BE CONTROLLED.**

In the second reading, Paul encourages the Colossians to remain faithful to Jesus. This was in the time some people were teaching strange ideas and rules that distracted so many people. In such a situation, there was nothing else to do, but to come back to their origins as Christians. **That is why Paul reminds them that when they were baptized, they became new people;** they died to their old way of life and were raised to a new life with Jesus Christ. Here **Paul is telling us to keep our hearts and minds on Jesus**, not just on the things of this world. **This does not mean ignoring life here on earth, but it means putting God first in everything.** For that we need **to leave some of our things behind:** things like **greed, anger, and bad desires.**

When we follow Jesus, we become a “new self”, and day by day God is helping us to become more like Him. This reading is another reminder to think about what really matters in life: focusing on Jesus and live His way.

In the Gospel, we have a story where Jesus calls the man a fool. **In the Bible, a fool is not just someone who makes a mistake. A fool is someone who lives as if God does not matter.** What made this man foolish was not because he was rich or successful. **There is nothing wrong with working hard, saving, or enjoying life. What made him fool was that he believed that his wealth could secure his future and give him true life.** He lived as if he was in control, as if tomorrow was guaranteed, and as if God and others do not exist.

If you read carefully, you will figure out how his thoughts are: he talks to himself, about himself, and for himself. He never thanks God for the harvest, he never considers giving to the poor, he never even talks about his family. His world is small: just him and his barns. **Jesus warns that greed shrinks our souls.** When we live only for ourselves, we forget what really matters: love, relationships, generosity, and faith.

This Gospel reminds us to pause and ask: what am I truly trusting in? Is it in my security, in my bank account, or in God? Am I so busy building my little world around me and forget the people around me? **Jesus calls us to live differently: to see our time, our money, and gifts as opportunities that we have. If we are blessed, it is time now for us to go and bless our brothers and sisters around us, and honor God.** Life is short, we cannot take everything with us, but we can send love ahead by being generous.

Let us live each day fully, loving God and sharing what we have. That is what it means to be truly rich. This week, let us all try to bless at least one person with our time, our help, or our generosity. **LIFE IS A GIFT TO BE RECEIVED, NOT A PROJECT TO BE CONTROLLED.**

May God bless us all.