

**Our readings ask age old, fundamental questions
Questions men and women of all ages and all cultures have asked**

What is the meaning of life?

Where do we find fulfillment?

Where are our hearts?

Our first reading was from what is known as OT Wisdom literature

Ecclesiastes or Qoheleth gives us his insight

Vanity, all is vanity

This is similar to expressing Holy, Holy, Holy 3 times

Nothing is more holy

For Qoheleth nothing is more vain than possessions

But this word has other meanings as well

One is meaningless

So he can be saying nothing is more meaningless

Another way to interpret this is transitory

Again, nothing is more transitory

Seeing all of these gives a clearer picture of what he means

He sees all things as no more than a vapor or a breath

Kind of like a morning fog that is here one moment

And then gone the next

But there was also a sense that hard work

Done in a proper manner should be rewarded

It seems right that one should be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor

But where does this leave us?

Qoheleth sums this up with a question for our reflection

What profit comes to a man

From all the toil and anxiety of heart

With which he has labored under the sun?

What did it get him in the end?

Qoheleth isn't telling us we should just forget working

Forget striving

He is telling us that there is fulfillment in doing the task itself

And doing it well

The real fruits of labor are in the labor itself

Yes, seeing the fruits may be nice

But it is vanity

It is transitory

If we find our fulfillment in the striving and commitment

We don't have to wait until the project is completed

We will enjoy the fruits every moment of every day

St Paul sees this in light of Christ

That we should seek what is above

Like Qoheleth, St Paul has a question for our reflection:

If we have died with Christ in our baptism

And now live with him

Isn't it foolish to live as if we are still earthbound?

It is a foolishness we see in our Gospel

A man comes to Christ

Asking him to settle an inheritance dispute

And Jesus warns us to beware of greed

There is more to life than possessions

In his parable

Christ tell us the man is a fool

He has not learned what is truly important in this life

The man is not criticized because he is rich

He is not criticized for not caring for those less fortunate

Rather, there is a greed that lies beneath his actions

The man desires more

Simply so he can have more

And God tells him this night your life will be demanded

Not as a punishment

It is his time

This statement points to the futility of that sort of life

Collecting what does not last has no value

It will pass to another when we are gone

This attitude to life can be humorous

Jack Benny once said a robber came up to him

Your money or your life!

Silence

Your money or your life!

I'm thinking; I'm thinking

It can affect us in strange ways

After 9/11

What did our president ask the people of our nation to do?

Don't give in to terrorism

Don't cower and retreat into a shell

Go out and shop!

**Basically he was telling us to follow the example of the man in
our Gospel**

Rest, eat, drink and be merry!

That will prove to the terrorists they have not won

I tell you what

If that is our identity

If that is what gives meaning to our lives

The terrorists don't have to do anything

We have already lost

And more than our economy is at risk

As the Gospel points out

Our eternal souls are at risk

Ecclesiastes was right

Life is transitory

Even time itself is a creature of God and belongs to this world

For there is no time in eternity

Possessions feed our vanity

Thinking we can purchase salvation

Life is meant to be lived

It is in the struggles of everyday living we find meaning

When we are so worried about our reputation

Worried about finishing our barns

Whatever they may be

So we can store up possessions

We have forgotten how to live

This is also why a very young life can be a very full life

**What we see as someone not having all the opportunities in life
can be a rich, pleasing offering to their creator**

But we have to learn how to live

As God's chosen creatures

All of creation is at our fingertips

We need food and water

We need shelter

We need clothing

As artists we imitate creation

And reproduce it in new and creative ways

As creators in the image of the Creator

We use the goods of the earth to make life more comfortable

We use our knowledge to make advancements in science

But we also need wisdom to judge

Just because we can do something

Does not mean we ought to do it

Science has advanced so we can save the life of a 21 to 22 week old baby

And at the same time we can develop chemicals that take the life one a day old

Or we can end their life at any point before birth

Which ought we to do?

Are we living a life hidden in Christ as St Paul tells us?

Or are we trying to live a life hidden from Christ

Being at Mass every Sunday builds a foundation

But it is not a guarantee

Are we living this in our homes during the week?

Are we bringing Christ into our work places?

Into our schools?

John Paul II taught us that one attribute of God is gift

It is not what He does

It is who He is

And as creatures made in His likeness

We are called to imitate Him

Living lives as gift to another

In His generosity

God does not run empty

And living generous lives in Christ

Our barns will always be full

Maybe not with material possessions that remain here and decay

But with spiritual possessions that will last for eternity