



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

18th Sunday Year C

This hoard of yours, whose will it be?

Readings: Ecclesiastes 1: 2: 21-23, Ps 89, Colossians 3: 1-5, 9-11, Luke 12: 13-21

During my university years as a group of college friends we decided to move out of grotty overpriced town centre digs and rent an old eight bed roomed farmhouse outside town with an acre of garden - for the same price. At the end of our time there, one of the men decided to get married and have his reception in the house and grounds. We all volunteered to be waiters and barmen and bouncers.

The day arrived. The couple were wedded. The party began. The only hint of trouble on the horizon was a minibus gaggle of his increasingly intoxicated Welsh aunties. We managed to get to the cutting of the cake without incident. Then, as the happy couple posed with the beautiful ceremonial silver knife penetrating the top layer of icing, in a moment of rare silence, a voice boomed out.....

‘You see that knife? That should have come to us !’

The rest of the afternoon disappeared in an increasingly unpleasant rehearsal of every last detail of family infighting over inheritances past. It’s amazing just how forensic we can be about resentments.

By the time we, 'the staff', had retired to our rooms, it was all the groom and his brothers could do to manhandle the battling biddies onto the westbound bus.

Wills, inheritances, the accumulation of wealth...it's not a new problem.

In today's Gospel a man approaches Jesus seeking justice in his claim against his brother in, what to him seems, an unjust will settlement.

(This is quite a foundational problem in ancient Israel because you will recall that Jacob, Israel himself, got his inheritance by duping his poor old dad and thereby robbing his brother with the connivance of his doting Mama. See Genesis 27 for the full 'S.P'. There is nothing new under the sun.)

Jesus is having none of it. He tells the parable of the rich but foolish farmer who spends his days accumulating, indulging and planning for more. His priorities turn out to be utterly misplaced because he has focussed on the temporal and neglected the eternal. When God requires a man's soul He does not look at his bank account or property portfolio.

He will look at how the man has used the many gifts that have come his way. We are not to be fussed about how rich we appear in the eyes of our fellow man but only about becoming rich in the eyes of God.

There are several things a Christian needs to bear in mind here. The first is this: *'Naked we came into the world and naked we will depart. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.'* Job 1 v 21.

We are sojourners here. We own nothing. We are stewards of Creation.

Our Wills and our wills need to be ordered by the will of God. We are to order our affairs for the building up of God's kingdom and the education of our hearts in selflessness and compassion. We may have a right and proper concern, in that ordering, for our dependants and those God has given us to love and serve in this life but we are to be generous to the mission and charitable ministry of the Faith and to the needy.

We can take nothing with us.

The ordering of our affairs is a Christian duty and should be the result of considerable prayer. Dying intestate is passing careless. We all know we are going to die. Better to pay a lawyer £100 to write your will than half a million in fees to arbitrate the warring factions laying claim to your estate. That is a human duty.

But that is but a token of our true priorities. Most important is our perspective on the real inheritance. If we want to inherit eternal life then there is only one Will that matters. That is the will of God. Who will inherit the Kingdom of God? The sons and daughters of the King? Who are these blessed children? The brothers and sisters of Jesus who do His will. Where are we adopted as God's children? In the waters of baptism. Where is this last will and testament signed? It is signed at the Calvary in the Blood of Jesus. It is rehearsed on the altars of the Church at every Mass.

'Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei novi et aeterni TESTAMENTI....'

Here is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal testament.

If we are in Christ, if we strive, by His grace, to become more and more like Him each day, if we love the Father, if we behave like His children expressing His compassionate heart to the world, if we turn from the idolatry of wealth and seek the eternal, if our stewardship is ordered according to His will, then we will be heirs to all that truly matters.

Who gets Granny's ormolu clock or her villa in Cannes doesn't matter twopence.

What we stand to inherit, if we are faithful, is forever.

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