

26th Sunday (B)

30th September 2018

‘An Answer for the Rich!’

Num 11: *If only all the people of God were prophets!*

Ps 18: *from*

presumption restrain your servant

James 5: *your wealth is all rotting!*

Mk 9: 38–48: *if your hand ... foot ... eye should cause you to sin ...*

There’s so much to choose from, today, in the various Scripture readings — from Numbers, from St James, from Our Lord in the Gospel ... But I think that I want to focus on the 2nd Reading today, which has some words for the rich who hoard up treasures on earth ... St James uses some very stern language here, doesn’t he? I think we should all have the attitude that what we own we have received ‘on loan’ from the Creator. Ultimately none of us has created these possessions we call ‘our own,’ have we? Everything we have, right down to the cash in our pockets and the food on our table is a gift, provided by God, who has given us this beautiful, fertile and richly-endowed world in which we live. We may own more, or we may own less — sometimes it’s just a luck of birth ... were we born into a comfortably-off family in an economically rich country, or were we born in poverty in a part of the world with fewer opportunities or more inequalities? Every person has the right to be fed and

to live decently, and if that means he or she needs assistance from those who have more, then it’s the duty of the one with more to give to the one who hasn’t enough to live on.

I have highlighted on the front of the Newsletter this week two ways in which we may assist those in need — globally through CaFOD, and locally through the FoodBank. The advantage of both of these is that we can be sure that what we give is definitely going to benefit those in need: nothing is going to get misused.

We are reminded by St Paul in one of his letters that “we brought nothing into this world, and that we will take nothing out of it”: nothing material, that is. We must, therefore, instead, store up treasure in heaven, and our giving generously to God in our prayer life, and to our needy neighbour in love and charity, are very blessed ways in which to amass heavenly treasure. Think of looking upon this earth with the eyes of God, with the eyes of the saints and angels. What has any worth? — Our larger house or car, or our having saved a fellow human being from starvation and indignity? We know the answer to that.

Now, we all have decisions to make, every day, about what we spend on and what we don't. But let's seek Jesus's guidance on that matter; and make sure that we each have the poor in mind always — better to err on the side of generosity to them than meanness. After Holy Communion we'll hear from a CaFOD rep in the parish as to what our Harvest Fast-Day collection next Sunday will be used for; but additionally, I'd like you to donate to the FoodBank if you can; the parish has a monthly standing-order to the FoodBank, as part of our charitable giving, to help it with sundry top-up purchases, but at this Harvest time of year it would be good also to make a donation of our shopping to benefit those going hungry in our own town. God bless your reflections today on your duty to our poor brothers and sisters.