

Missionary Commentary

Eighteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

August 3, 2025

Sunday Readings

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23
Psalm 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14 and 17
Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11
Luke 12:13-21

Christ is All and in All

I was 26 years old when I went to Brazil in 1978 knowing that I was making a commitment of at least 6 years as our Reverend Mother at the time indicated to me. I had the opportunity in the summer of 1977 to discern this commitment during a six-week stay with our sisters there. I accepted the tropical climate; (I was born in Chicago and always lived in the Midwest.) I confronted the Amazon reptiles and insects of many sizes; and struggled with a language totally foreign to me. As I shadowed one of our sisters in her ministry in the base communities, I learned much about the people who we were serving in the village of Icoaraci. These moments gave me the strength to overcome the heat, the tarantulas, and the discouragement of not understanding people.

Among the many goals I set for myself, was to live like the poor and try not to think that “back home,” I could do this or have that. As I learned Portuguese and began visiting on my own, I felt the warmth and joy of the people. The “back home” temptation was almost forgotten as “home” was now in this village with these people. I was awakened to the fact that I could never live like the poor because even though, according to American standards, we lived in a poor home and had few comforts, according to Brazilian standards, we were still well to do. Our people truly lived poorly not by choice, but because of many social injustices that plagued the emerging nations.

We did have many things in common and the most important one was our love of God and a commitment to living God’s project by following the teachings of Jesus. Without being aware of it, the people taught me what real poverty is and how a true follower of Jesus acts and treats others.

It is not a passive acceptance of the injustices of reality, but a holy indignation and sent us out into the streets to protest and make known the changes that were necessary. We only won a few of our battles, but the inner peace and joy of knowing we were promoting the teachings of Jesus, kept igniting our spirits. The toil of living in God’s way is tiring, at times discouraging and sometimes tempts us to give up. But with God at our side, how can we be afraid? Well, we can be afraid, but we can’t throw in the towel. Our way of living, our relationship with others and God, and our choices and motivations will help to keep us grounded in peace as we reject vanities and greed. The shirt that I am wearing at this very moment reads: “The best things in life are not things”.

When you take time to do your reflecting on today’s liturgy, I pray that through each of the readings, you can find the message that the Spirit wants to communicate to you. It will be a message to change, to deepen, to embrace and to reach out to others as you reach into yourself where God dwells. Blessings.

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Notes on the Readings

First Reading – Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

The complete section of the Vanities passage is not here, but it is well-known by many of us. This one deals with the vanity of working hard and still worrying about the outcome. The toil of life will always be part of our days, but trust in God will help us to realize that not everything depends on us.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14 and 17

Today's psalm complements the first reading by showing us the other side. The psalmist recognizes that we are just dust, but God graciously cares for us and with God's help, we will prosper. The joy of trusting in God will bless all our days.

Second Reading – Colossians 2:12-14

St. Paul exhorts the Colossians to act as people who have committed themselves to Jesus Christ. We become a new people whose behavior is proof of this commitment. The last words of this letter are especially important to us: in God's eyes, there is no distinction of culture, of religious belief, of economic difference because Christ is all and in all people.

Gospel – Luke 12:13-21

The teaching of Jesus in this Gospel is so clear and challenging. There is no doubt that he is speaking to us about greed and accumulating many things. We can almost hear Jesus' voice calling out to us, "You, fool!" What a powerful expression! We do not know the hour or the day, but it could be this night and we must be ready.

Notes and Commentary by Sr. Nancy Schramm, OSF. Sr. Nancy is a past president of the USCMA and currently serves in a small rural parish. She also serves her religious community on various committees. She is a spiritual director and translates for other groups in Portuguese.

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