

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jun 17th 2016

My father often said, “Your reward will be in heaven”. It was his response to me when I would express concern (complain) about one irritation, struggle, or painful reminder of life’s many difficulties. He wasn’t offering a hollow reply; rather, he truly believed that there was an everlasting reward for living a life of gratitude, prayer, and dedication to his family, friends, community, and church.

In the gospel reading today, Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth” because they are fleeting and can be lost or stolen, “but store up treasures in heaven”. My father was rich in heavenly treasures (prayer and unwavering faith) and gave little time or thought to earthly possessions. As he would say, “anything more [money] than you need to pay the bills is a bother”. Being the fortunate recipient of his wisdom and witnessing how he lived his years in quiet confidence of his eventual “reward in heaven” my father taught me the most important lessons of my life shortly after he passed away in the early morning hours of his 91 year.

I grew up listening to my father’s stories and have tried to emulate his artful narratives through my daily interaction and periodic writings. In today’s reading; a story of jealousy, contempt, murder, pain, and fear, all short term earthly pursuits that result in inevitable suffering is told. When Athaliah realized that there was a threat to her reign (death of her son) she took the quickest means to securing her “treasures on earth” by killing the whole of the royal family, or so she thought. Her reign was short lived and ultimately she died by the same sword. We should ask ourselves, how many wars have been fought; blood has been shed, only to briefly secure earthly treasures?

My father had a peace about him throughout his life that carried through his final days. I had the honor of being by his side during his brief hospital stay and his end days at home. We talked at length about his faith and whether or not he found benefit in knowing that he was soon to be with family and friends that had passed before him. He smiled and said, “I’ll let you know”. His eye (soul) was sound and he was “filled with light”.

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