

## A NOTE FROM FATHER EICKHOFF

Today's Gospel passage gives us two examples from Jesus of people needing to come to a decision as to whether to carry out a task. In the first example, a builder must decide whether he has the means to complete a tower on his property. In the second example, a king whose army is outnumbered must decide whether he can successfully oppose an invading army. The key that links the two examples together is the calculation as to whether the resources exist to successfully carry out the task. As Christians, we must ask ourselves "what is the task that I am trying to accomplish?" I submit to you that the task we are trying to accomplish is the salvation of our souls and a place in the Kingdom of God. The next question we should be asking is "do I have on my own the resources to accomplish this task?" The answer to this question is very simple: "no."

It is a very plain truth that we human beings lack the resources, the skills, and the ability to accomplish our own salvation. Although this is a plain truth, we human beings do not like to admit it. We constantly find ourselves in the position of the builder or the king in that we imagine that we can accomplish something that is beyond our human capacity. We need to remind ourselves of the necessity to determine whether we can actually accomplish this goal by ourselves. Perhaps this is why Jesus is so adamant about the necessity to renounce earthly possessions. So long as we rely upon the things of this earth, we find ourselves constantly tempted in believing that our human wealth, skills, and abilities are sufficient to achieve salvation. They are not. We need God's grace and help to accomplish this task of salvation. Jesus is teaching us that freedom from this temptation to rely upon ourselves can only come from renouncing our belief in the effectiveness of earthly possessions.

Now, by renouncing our belief that earthly possessions - whether that is family relationships or wealth - can accomplish the task of salvation, we are not saying that earthly possessions are evil. We are simply saying that they are inadequate by themselves to accomplish our goal of salvation. These earthly possessions can be of great benefit in striving for salvation. However, no one should ever rely solely upon them. If a person were to rely solely upon them, then they will fall short of salvation. Since the importance of salvation is so great, Jesus is right to warn us in the most strenuous language about the danger of relying solely upon them.

### Extra Note:

I've been told that the email scammers are already using my position as pastor of St. Anne to try and solicit money or gift cards from St. Anne parishioners. This has become a perennial problem for pastors across the country that scammers are operating in this way. Here are some pointers to avoid being caught in their scams:

- Don't rely on the name that appears in your email program. The name can be faked.
- Check the actual email address. The only email address that I use at St. Anne Parish is: [freickhoff@stanneparish.org](mailto:freickhoff@stanneparish.org).
- I will not ask you to send money or gift cards to myself or to any individual person or organization. If I ever ask parishioners for donations, the donations will be sent to St. Anne Parish or to the Diocese of Joliet in accordance with the financial rules of the Diocese.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen Eickhoff  
Pastor