

8th Sunday, Feb 26, 2017, Cycle A

A long time ago, when I was still a seminarian, I once helped to move the furniture and belongings of an elderly lady. She was being evicted from her apartment. But, there was a problem. She didn't want to move. In fact, she was adamant about it. To get her out of the way, someone else took her shopping, while we did the work emptying her apartment.

It was a huge job. The lady hoarded things. For example, Styrofoam boxes of meals-on-wheels were stacked up all the way to the ceiling. It was nearly impossible to walk around in the apartment. It was filled up with junk.

It was a sad situation. This is how this elderly lady found security, by collecting things. Not in friendship with others people, not in personal relationship, in things.

Most of us probably do not accumulate things to the same extent as this elderly lady. Nonetheless, as time goes by, we tend to pick up things here and there. They mount up. Eventually, they can form an obstacle to our spiritual growth. Do we find our security in them, or in God?

Another way to phrase that questions is: Do we seek the kingdom of God first? Where do we place our priorities? Where do we put our time? Where do we put our energy? That is how we live out our priorities.

It all has to do with the decisions that we make. Will we serve God, or will we serve Mammon? Will we attend Mass Sunday morning, or will we choose a soccer game? We cannot serve both God and Mammon. We have to choose one or the other. And that can be hard to do, especially in our society which tells us that we can have it all, that we don't have to give up anything. But it doesn't work that way. I chose to become a priest, so that meant that I could not get married. Those of you who chose to get married to your spouse, by that decision ruled out other persons of the opposite sex.

When we make a choice, that rules out other possibilities in our life. So, what will it be? Will we serve God, or will we serve Mammon? What do we choose to be the most important thing in our life?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran theologian who was executed by the Nazis for plotting against Hitler. He once wrote this statement: "Not to choose is to choose." By that, he meant that if we hesitate in making a choice that in itself is a choice. We are most likely leaving the choice to others, just going along with the crowd, letting them decide for us. We are deluding ourselves in thinking that we haven't made a choice.

In just a few days, we will begin the season of Lent. That time of the year offers us the opportunity to reflect upon the choices we have made in our life, the choices that we still face. It forces us to confront reality, to see what we really are, and to see what we can become, what we should become. It is a time for telling the truth.

Will we serve God or Mammon? Will we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, or something else? What choice will we make?

Choose wisely.