



## **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

† **Sunday 4th August 2019**

In England and Wales – Prayer for the people of Europe

Keynote: Jesus calls us first to become rich in the sight of God

### **Book of Ecclesiastes 1: 2; 2: 21-23**

It is a sobering thought. For all our hard work and striving in this world, eventually, we have to leave behind everything we've worked for, and leave it to someone else! *'For so it is that a man who has laboured wisely, skilfully and successfully must leave what is his own to someone else who has not toiled for it at all!'* The author of Ecclesiastes tells us, *'Vanity of vanities. All is vanity!'* Interestingly, the word used for vanity *'hebel'* more literally means 'breath' or 'vapour' – something so transient – and quite lacking in substance. Money, material possessions, positions of power, all just so much as 'puff' in the air! The subject of so much of our earthly endeavours and labour, business, possessions, the sleepless nights of worry, the long hours of working, even money, all is worthless – without substance – when compared with that which is of real worth – the wisdom of God. *'For what does man gain for all the toil and strain he has undergone under the sun?'* It is sometimes very good for us in life to stand back from the 'hurly-burly' of living, and to reflect on why we are here and what our real destiny and purpose might be.

**Responsorial Psalm 94 (95)** – a processional song of thanksgiving

### **Letter of Paul to the Colossians 3: 1-5, 9-11**

This reading from Paul's letter continues from that of the previous week, it 'hits the ground running'. He writes about the same theme in the readings selected for today. *'Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ'* says Paul, *'you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is... Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth.'* Urging the disciples at Colossae to avoid distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave or freeman, Paul invites them, and indeed us too, to focus on the vital and important thing in our life: *'There is only Christ... he is everything and he is in everything.'*

### **Gospel according to Luke 12: 13-21**

The parable of the rich man who built bigger and bigger barns in which to keep his harvest, and then promptly died leaving his wealth and possessions to others is a timely reminder to each of us that rather than concentrating our efforts on worldly power or possessions, we should seek the important things in life! Asked by the man in the crowd to command his brother to share his inheritance, Jesus, instead warns the man, *'Be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life is not made secure by what he owns, even when he has more than he needs.'* This teaching turns accepted worldly wisdom on its head! So Jesus tells the story of the rich man: *'there was once a rich man who said... "I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them... laid up for many years to come."'* Jesus uses the parable to teach the people about the important matters of life. *'Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your souls; this hoard of yours, whose will it be then? So it is when a man stores up treasures for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God.'* Today, we may reflect on the real worth of our worldly goods, our debts, or possessions, and focus on what we might consider truly much more important in a lasting way.