

## HOMILY 18<sup>TH</sup> SUN OT YRC 2019

When I was practicing law, one of the things I did was probate estates. Going to probate court is generally pretty boring stuff, not the thing that movies, TV shows or novels are generally based upon. To open an estate after someone dies, someone must petition the court to be named personal representative or executor. If there is a will, it is usually the person that is named in the will. I was going to court one day to open an estate, and I thought it would be pretty boring stuff. The person that died was 97 years old. He had 10 children, 9 from his first marriage, they were all pretty much in their 70's and there was a 12 year old daughter from a young girlfriend. My client was the one named in the will. When I got to court, all 10 children were there and the girlfriend, that surprised me. When they called the case, one of them stood up and shouted "I object!" The judge said: "You cannot object. There is nothing to object to. Sit down." When I got up and told the judge that my client wanted to be named personal representative to handle the estate all hell broke loose. The 70 year old siblings were yelling at the little girl and her mother. People are screaming: "I object, I object." They are all yelling at each other. The judge looks at me and says: "can't you control your clients?" And I said: "my client is this guy standing next to me silent," the only one silent. Ultimately the judge had to clear the court. Greed is a terrible thing and this was pure greed. And you may guess that there was a great deal of money in the estate, but you would be wrong. All that was in the estate was a truck valued at about \$40,000. They were willing to give up all of these close family relationships fighting over \$40,000 dollars, the most extreme case of greed I saw, but it was disturbing to me how people would fight over money. People were willing to give up relationships with close friends and family for money.

In the Gospel reading, someone wants Jesus to be the judge and arbitrator for an inheritance. Jesus just says no to this and tells him a parable. The man in the parable clearly spent his whole life accumulating wealth and nothing else, pure greed. And the day before he dies he says "eat, drink and be

merry.” But the sad thing is that even if he had not died the next day, he would be unable to do that. Greed governed his life and my guess is that he would have been unable to do anything else. Because the truth is if you are looking to money or material possessions for security or happiness, you will never have enough. Research shows that the more luxuries you have, the less happiness they bring into your life. Making a difference in someone’s life is the only thing that leads to joy and fulfillment.

What are you willing to sacrifice for money? People have sacrificed their health, their marriage, their children, their parents, their reputation in the community for money or stuff. Now there is nothing evil about money or possessions in themselves, but we have to remember they are all gifts from God and we just have them on loan. When Aretha Franklin died recently a lot of people were asking how much money she left in her estate? All of it. We do not get to take any of it with you. There are no U hauls on the hearse. When you die, you want to leave money to take care of dependents, that is a good thing, but otherwise you may be just giving your friends and family something to fight over. And someone will put a dumpster in your driveway and empty out the contents. Friends and family members will probably want something with sentimental value, but everyone has a house full of stuff of their own. Some of your stuff may go to charity and that is a good thing. But your house will be emptied out and someone else will be living there soon. The difficult judgment you will have to make is deciding between need and greed. We cannot be so obsessed with money and stuff that we lose track of our obligations to God and to others. Are you putting off things today in favor of money or possessions? Next year may be too late. When we die we leave everything we had behind, what we take with us is what we have become. What have you become without your money or possessions? In the end it will be all about the love and the relationships.