

- Our first American-born saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton, once wrote: “The accidents of life separate us from our dearest friends, but let us not despair. God is like a looking glass in which souls see each other. The more we are united to Him by love, the nearer we are to those who belong to Him.”
- St. Elizabeth was no stranger to suffering that comes from losing a loved one, including losing her mother as a 3-year-old, a younger sister at age 4, and her 34-year-old husband, William, when she was 28.
- No doubt St. Elizabeth reflected a great deal on these losses, and no doubt these losses helped St. Elizabeth to see and understand what is most important in life: salvation.
- Last Sunday I made reference to a few of the tragedies we’ve had in the parish recently. To be truthful, there have been even more tragedies than the 3 children we’ve lost in the last 14 months.
- Suffering enters the lives of us all, and there are very few of us who do not know the terrible pain that comes from the loss of a loved ones.
- This life doesn’t last forever. Indeed, this life can be taken away from us in an instant, without any notice whatsoever. And this is why we must keep an eternal perspective.
- What I mean by that is that we must constantly remind ourselves that this world is not our home. Our true home is in Heaven, and that’s where we must place all our hopes.
- At the same time, having an eternal perspective means that we must constantly check ourselves to see whether we are spending more time preparing ourselves for Heaven, or if we are devoting more of our time to getting ahead in worldly ways.
- This can be a hard balance to strike, for there is a real goodness in doing well in our earthly pursuits so that we can provide for our families and for the Church.
- It’s a good thing to be successful in life, but only as long as we do not become attached to worldly values or things, for worldly attachments impede our salvation.
- This is why our readings today admonish us not to place our hopes and trust in the vanities of this world. We are cautioned against the dangers of greed and materialism.
- Our Lord is very clear in the Gospel passage that we are to guard our hearts from all greed and not put too much stock in our material possessions. What is important is not that we are materially rich, but that we are rich in what matters to God.
- And what matters to God, my friends, is virtue – is holiness. What God wants for us in this life more than anything else is that we know Him – that we’ve developed a relationship with Him on earth that prepares us to be united with Him for all eternity.
- When we die, what will matter is how holy we’ve become during our time on earth. What will matter is how we’ve tried to grow in virtue throughout our lives. What will matter is how we used our material possessions to help others in need.
- What will matter, my brothers and sisters, is the gratitude we’ve shown God for all our many blessings. What will matter is how well we’ve loved both God and neighbor. What will matter is how we striven to be close to God in this life.
- Our readings today remind us so powerfully that the things of this world will never make us happy or give us true joy. And this is why St. Paul reminds us so clearly in our epistle to seek what is above, and not the things of this earth.
- It’s why he tells us to put to death all that is worldly within us.

- For living for the things of this world will only leave us feeling empty. That's the great sadness of the sin of greed.
- Greed can never be sated; it can never be quenched. If left unchecked, greed simply continues to grow stronger within us, actually consuming our souls as we seek to consume the vanities of this world.
- This is why Jesus is so clear in His warning to us today, telling us to "Take care to guard against all greed."
- If we place our hopes and trust in the things of this world, then we will end up like the rich man in our Gospel parable today: a fool who has nothing to show for himself on judgment day.
- So the vice of greed must be countered with the virtue of generosity. When we are able to detach from our material possessions and share them with others with charitable abandon, we provide a protection for our souls against greed.
- It is for this reason that contributing to the support of the Church is one of the 6 Precepts of the Church. It is for this reason that the Church promotes the concept of tithing, which means to give 10% of your gross earnings to charity.
- As your pastor I am ever grateful for all of you who are so generous. We are a parish with a lot of expenses right now, and it's a testament to your generosity that we are meeting our needs pretty well.
- But in addition to providing our time, talent, and treasure to the Church and other charitable causes, we must also learn to "seek what is above...not of what is on earth" through prayer and meditation.
- There must be an active component to our quest for virtue. But there must be a contemplative component as well. We must learn to be both Martha and Mary, at times serving and giving of ourselves, while listening and reflecting at other times.
- This is how virtue and holiness grow within us: by actively doing virtuous things **and** by engaging in a life of prayer and meditation. For it is in doing virtuous things that we serve our Lord, and it is in silent prayer that we are united to Him by love.
- My dear brothers and sisters, as we consider today's readings, as well as all that's happened in our parish lately, I must ask you: Where do your hopes lie? In whom or what do you place your trust? What captivates your heart?
- If you are more concerned with the things of this world than you are with God, if you put more time into managing your money and worldly affairs than you do praying, then you are placing your soul in mortal danger.
- Therefore, let us pray today that our souls may be imbued with a spirit of Christian charity and generosity that we may love God by loving those who are less fortunate than ourselves.
- Let us also seek to raise our minds to the things of heaven through prayer, so that we may be united with God in love. And let us hope that by so doing, we will one day be reunited with our deceased loved ones.
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, pray for us.