

MONEY AS THE NEW IDOL

One cause of this situation is found in our relationship with money, since we calmly accept its dominion over ourselves and our societies. The current financial crisis can make us overlook the fact that it originated in a profound human crisis: the denial of the primacy of the human person! We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. Ex 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. The worldwide crisis affecting finance and the economy lays bare their imbalances and, above all, their lack of real concern for human beings; man is reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption. # 55



Questions:

1. Have human beings been reduced to what they can consume?
2. Have we gone off-track as human beings and lost our focus on the human person?

The Gospel, radiant with the glory of Christ's cross, constantly invites us to rejoice. A few examples will suffice. "Rejoice!" is the angel's greeting to Mary (Lk 1:28). Mary's visit to Elizabeth makes John leap for joy in his mother's womb (cf. Lk 1:41). In her song of praise, Mary proclaims: "My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour" (Lk 1:47). When Jesus begins his ministry, John cries out: "For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled" (Jn 3:29). Jesus himself "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit" (Lk 10:21). His message brings us joy: "I have said these things to you, so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11). Our Christian joy drinks of his brimming heart. He promises his disciples: "You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy" (Jn 16:20). He then goes on to say: "But I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you" (Jn 16:22). The disciples "rejoiced" (Jn 20:20) at the sight of the risen Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the first Christians "ate their food with glad and generous hearts" (2:46). Wherever the disciples went, "there was great joy" (8:8); even amid persecution they continued to be "filled with joy" (13:52). The newly baptized eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" (8:39), while Paul's jailer "and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God" (16:34). Why should we not also enter into this great stream of joy? #5

Questions:

1. Is this the way your fellow parishioners live their faith and commitment to Jesus Christ?
2. Have we had too much religion and not entered into a faith-life as the people in the Gospels lived their life?



Questions:

1. Who are the outcasts and the leftovers in today's world
2. What parts of our society needs to be touched by the values of the Gospel of Jesus?
3. Where is there the waste of food in our world when people in many Third World countries cannot obtain proper nourishment?
4. How have you reacted to the teachings of Pope Francis?



How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?

Google the full text at: *APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM*

SUMMER WITH POPE FRANCIS

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Our faith always has direct consequences for our social and business life. Pope Francis, fully in step with the social teaching of the Church, outlines how we must approach the reality of inequality and lack of respect for different social groups within our world. This has always been a very controversial teaching. We should not back away from the controversy it will create in our own parishes.

HUMAN BEINGS CAST ASIDE??

Just as the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say “thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape. #53

Questions:

1. Is this an accurate description of our economic and social situation in today's world?

ARE HUMAN BEINGS REDUCED TO CONSUMER GOODS?

Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a “disposable” culture which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new. Exclusion ultimately has to do with what it means to be a part of the society in which we live; those excluded are no longer society's underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised – they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the “exploited” but the outcast, the “leftovers.” # 53

