

**Theme: Loving God – Piety**

**A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (12:16-21)**

*Then he told them a parable. "There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest.*

*He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?'*

*And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, "Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!"*

*But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?'*

*Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God."*

*The Gospel of the Lord*

In our Gospel, the rich man was focused only upon the harvest of his own land and showed no interest whatsoever in the bountiful harvest that God had planned and stored up for him in heaven. As the apostle Paul says, *“our true citizenship is in heaven and no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor has the human heart even conceived, of what God has prepared for those who love him.”*

We have received the spirit of God, which makes us a spiritual people rich in piety and love.

The **natural** person does not accept what pertains to the spirit and considers it foolishness because he cannot understand and judge what comes from the spiritual realm. He chooses to retain the spirit of **this** world. So who’s the fool in our parable? Such a person cannot understand the spiritual realities and therefore lacks judgment and reverence for what comes from the Spirit. When we evangelize, we have to demonstrate what piety and love of God is.

**Question to ponder:** So, how do Christians define “Piety?” What does it mean to you?

Around the year 600 AD, Pope St. Gregory defined piety as *“to give filial worship to God precisely as our **Father** and to **relate** with all people as children of the same Father.”*

But can we really narrow down the charism of Piety to this one simple sentence and understand what it is and what it looks like? Judging from all of your responses, the answer is obviously “NO.” The gift of piety from the Holy Spirit is a disposition and concept that involves many other aspects besides the filial relationship, and it cannot be reduced to a single thought or phrase – unless we call it Love.

Yet, whether we call it piety or just Loving God, we still can't describe what that means in one simple word, sentence or even action. Saints, Popes, and theologians have all written extensively throughout the ages, trying to explain what piety is and what acts of piety look like; Even today, they still try to explain the concept of it with philosophical phrases:

Pope Francis said that:

*“piety is synonymous of having an authentic religious spirit; a confidence in God as our Father and the capacity to pray to him with love and simplicity of heart.*

I'm somewhat surprised that we don't yet have a **definition** of piety that is more simplistic of heart.

**Question to ponder:** I'd like to hear some examples of how piety or reverence changes us. Can anyone give me an example of what piety looks like in their life?

**Question to ponder:** How do you hear other cursillistas respond to piety in groupings? Does it seem like they understand it or do they stumble when trying to answer it?

Well, Pope Francis teaches that piety allows us to further our relationship and communion with God to **live as his children**. That seems a bit vague and quite generalized. How does one get piety to further their relationship?

He continues by saying, *at the same time, piety allows us to **share or to evangelize His Fatherly love** towards others and to **recognize** them, as brothers and sisters of **the same Father**.*

Pope St. Gregory tries to give us a definition and Pope Francis gives us corollaries. In other words, he tells us what the natural consequences of piety are; a deeper communion with God as His children; and the ability to share or evangelize His fatherly love. No wonder it seems confusing.

But simply put, we don't get piety to further our relationship and to evangelize **as if we control it**. It's a gift of the Holy Spirit that places us in a proper state of mind, the mind of Christ. Piety enables us to reach out to God with childlike love, so that we want to willfully please Him, even if it means making sacrifices. We can all understand the child-like love that cries out Abba, and a child's desire to make a parent smile.

Piety is what reminds us of the holiness of God and it encourages our **adoration** of Him for **who and what he is** – not just as our creator and the creator of the universe, but as our spiritually adopted Father. And because of the love that we have for Him, we desire to obey and respect whatever he deems is best for us. We may not **always** obey Him because of concupiscence, but the gift of piety **directs** us to a deeper love and to that **desire** of being obedient to Him.

When my wife was teaching a confirmation class, she told the kids that piety strengthens our soul, makes us stronger individuals, and transforms us into becoming better Christians. When they asked her how, she gave them this example:

Suppose that your favorite sports team is playing on Sunday and you want to see the game, but the game is at the same time as when you would normally go to Mass. You might consider skipping Mass, but your gift of piety encourages you to get up and go to an earlier Mass instead. It was your reverence for God that motivated you to do that. You don't get piety by doing things; piety gets **you** to do things.

Our heavenly Father only wants to lavish upon us greater gifts and more abundant love and joy. So he has endowed us with the gift of piety for what is holy. He wants us to store up the riches we get from heaven instead of hoarding worldly treasures. The true riches, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, help us to approach God with a healthy disposition and with piety to see Him as a loving Father. Through piety we remain hopeful of His Holy promises, we remain faithful in our love for him and neighbor, and we remain ever vigilant or watchful for his return because we revere Him and we wish to be with Him.

Today's gospel, along with last Sunday's Gospel on the 10 virgins, and tomorrow's gospel of the talents, all express the proper disposition of hope, fidelity, and watchfulness that we should live by as we await for His return, or for the time of our own judgment.

The rich man said, "I have so many good things stored up, so I can rest, eat, drink, and be merry for many years!" There is no piety or reverence in storing up earthly goods. Our Faithfulness, or fidelity to God, directs us to store up only treasures in heaven. That is what Pope Francis means by saying "piety is synonymous of having an authentic religious spirit. We cannot serve both God and mammon.

## **Summary**

In tomorrow's gospel, you will hear that 2 of the servants who were called for an accounting, received the same reward. They were equally welcomed into the master's joy. It didn't matter whether the 5 talents were made into 10 or the 2 only made into 4. God shows us that coming into his rest and joy is based upon our fidelity to the Spirit and not on our material possessions. He wants us to know that Happiness, rest, satisfaction, and true joy only come when we hand over to God everything that we have received from Him, and profited by, through the Holy Spirit. That is piety, having an authentic religious spirit. And authenticity is necessary for evangelization. Without it, the world will hear the beautiful words of the Gospel but see that our works and actions don't reflect it. They will perceive Christians as hypocrites and cast us away with scorn. We can't give true witness without Piety.