

“I tell you, brothers and sisters, the time is running out...For the world in its present form is passing away.” These are powerful words from St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, which we just heard in the second reading. In fact, the entire Liturgy of the Word this weekend provides us with the juxtaposition of what one may call “passing things vs. eternal things.”

What are “passing things”? “Passing things” may be considered to be those things that belong *primarily* to this temporary, fallen world that simply won’t last forever. Some examples of “passing things” might be work or one’s job, money, sex, politics, earthly power and influence, popularity, fame, the obsession over the state of one’s physical body and appearance, etc. Now many of these passing things, for the exception of vanity, are legitimately good and necessary things. So these things are not intrinsically evil and yet we can fall prey to allowing these “temporary, passing things” to consume and control us in a harmful manner, thereby distracting us from our ultimate purpose of being one with God our Father.

We can succumb to temptations and place these passing things above and beyond more important, eternal things like holiness and our Catholic faith, which is defined by our personal relationship with Christ *in and through* His Church. On this earth, we can fall into the trap of immersing our lives *entirely* in “passing things” that ultimately won’t truly satisfy us and frankly won’t really matter in the end *precisely* because they *will pass away*. It’s exactly because this earthly life is extremely temporary, that we should *immediately* embrace Jesus’ call to repentance, to turn away from sin, and embrace the new life of grace He wants to give us in abundance.

Brothers and sisters, in this earthly life we need to have the right perspective and prioritize—establishing a hierarchy of importance within our lives, placing eternal things, such as faith, hope, and love, holiness, and our relationship with Christ, at the very top. It is in eternal things such as these, that we will find true and lasting happiness, love, freedom, and peace. This is true because, simply put, *we’re created for eternity. We’re created for immortality.* Human nature is *intrinsically ordered towards eternal life*—we possess this mysterious natural desire

to not only live, but to *live forever*. We see this innate, natural desire manifested in our popular culture with all those funny infomercials on TV trying to sell anti-aging facial creams and hair products that can supposedly make your gray hairs disappear. Now don't misunderstand me, those things, while they might be fake, are not "intrinsically evil," but rather they're like popular pieces of evidence pointing to the reality that human beings are made for eternal life, thereby craving immortality.

In fact, this earthly, temporal life is given to us out of the infinite goodness and love of our Heavenly Father and is intended to be an opportunity for us to freely choose how we want to spend eternity—to freely choose whether or not we will accept or reject God our Father. Do we want to enjoy eternity with God our Father in Heaven or do we want to spend eternity apart from God our Father in Hell? God lovingly gives us the free choice, and so this temporary, earthly life is the opportunity to actually make that choice by how we live our lives and how we love God and our neighbor in response to the great love that God the Father has shown us through Christ His Son.

Brothers and sisters, if we find ourselves not being satisfied by eternal things like our relationship with Christ and the gift He has given us in the Catholic faith, then our lack of satisfaction is not because our Lord and Savior is somehow incapable of satisfying the deepest desires of our hearts—rather, it’s because we’re simply *not allowing* Christ to truly satisfy us in and through His Catholic Church. While our Lord Jesus sincerely *wants* to satisfy us through grace and the gift of our Catholic faith, in our weakness, we tend to keep rejecting His offers.

Furthermore, while our physical bodies are *also* meant for eternity in that they are a fundamental part of our human nature, and *yes* our bodies are *good* in that they are gifts from God meant to glorify Him, and while *yes* maintaining one’s physical health is good and necessary through diet and exercise, *no matter how much time and effort we put into trying to get that “perfect body,”* we’re eventually going to get older, our bodies will inevitably grow weaker and more frail, and ultimately, we will die. I’m not trying to be morbid and negative here, but lovingly realistic.

Death is an objective reality that will come to *all of us*, regardless of who we are, regardless of how much money we make, regardless of our resumes and how many professional accomplishments we might have, regardless of how famous we are, how much material stuff we possess, etc.

And yet the beauty of the Catholic faith is that if our hearts are truly set on Christ and on eternal things, such as our personal relationship with Jesus in and through His Church, holiness, and the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, then we shouldn't be afraid of death. This is radical—this is counter-cultural. Rather if we're immersed in such eternal things that *will truly last and matter in the end*, then we can look forward to the Kingdom Heaven with great joy, peace, and freedom.

We need only to look at the example of the first Apostles who are called by Jesus in today's Gospel. Notice the mysterious immediacy of their response to His call. Seemingly, without *any hesitation*, Simon (who would later be renamed Peter), his brother Andrew, James, and his brother John, abandon *everything* and follow Jesus. And notice the

details given in Mark's account where he mentions that James and John left their father Zebedee in the boat "along with the hired men"—meaning that James and John were leaving behind a wealthy life and a successful fishing business. In other words, these men abandoned the "passing things" of this life, especially material wealth, in order to root themselves in eternal things—in order to follow the Eternal Son of God, our Lord Jesus, Who *is* the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Brothers and sisters, in a few moments, on this altar, in the Most Holy Eucharist, we will encounter the *same* Jesus Who lovingly called the first Apostles from their fishing boats. In fact, the Eucharist *always* orients us toward eternity since it *is* the Eternal Son of God, and as our Savior, He *alone* can truly satisfy the deepest desires of our hearts.