

## Homily for 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

I find the letter from St. James to be a bit annoying. Simple and straightforward, it doesn't leave much room to squirm around in. Today's second reading is a good example.

St. James writes: "Weep over your impending miseries...for your gold and silver have corroded..." This past summer we watched the Olympics. Who won the gold and silver medals? Do you remember? Does it matter? Yet look how much money was spent on these games or how much we honored these athletes most of whose names we can't recall.

Sometimes I wonder if these coveted gold and silver medals are symbolic of the gold and silver that we covet in our own lives. After all, don't we want to be rich...not worry about money. How much money have we spent on the Lottery in the last three months? As St. James so aptly puts it, don't we want to live in "luxury and pleasure?"

And yet "luxury and pleasure" are not only more of a fantasy than a reality, they are also sadly disappointing. Ultimately giving us very little of any of the things we desire,

they make us wrapped up in our own lives with little or no attention to what is truly important in life. The pursuit of “gold and silver” can cause us to be so invested in our own advancement that we forget we are all sisters and brothers. When one of our sisters or brothers has less, than I am less. When someone is starving and I do not feed them, it is my heart that is starving for I am less than the person God created me to be.

The true treasure of our lives is not “silver or gold.” What we own, what we possess does not define who we are or how well we live and have lived our lives. The true treasure of our lives is life itself. It is a gift that is sacred. It is a gift that calls out to us to be honored and treasured...treasured within ourselves...treasured within the entire specter of life from the unborn to the elderly, from the gifted to the seriously handicapped and developmentally disabled.

If we could only learn to treasure the value of life itself, then the letter of St. James would cease to be frightening because our values would be those of Christ Jesus who came that we might have life and have it to its fullest.