

Think about the place where you live. What are the three most precious things in your home right now? Maybe there's an heirloom, a gift, or a person. Have you got three? Now imagine that while you're sitting here a thief has entered your home and sees all three. Could you live without one of them? Two of them? All three of them? The dangerous part of this example is that it will send everyone home in a panic after Mass today.

I want to illustrate Jesus' saying that where your treasure is there your heart lies also. Namely, the things we treasure tell us what's important to the heart. There's a reason why those things at home are precious to you, but what we treasure isn't just what we own; it's also what we do with our time.

Let's examine a few cases to ask what's really important to people. Imagine a business in one of the skyscrapers of Raytown. It's a fairly small office with three people who do "office work"--typing, filing, answering the phone. They all have the same job description--they simply divvy up the work each day.

First there's Jan. Jan got this job because her mother used to work here. They needed help one summer when she was looking for work, so she started on. And stayed. The job is OK with her; she could take it or leave it. But it was good enough for Mom, so it's good enough for her.

Next there's Pete. Pete is fresh out of school and engaged to be married. He doesn't like this job; he thinks he's destined for greater things. But it took him six weeks just to find this work. For the sake of his future he'll stay with it till something better comes along.

Finally there's Barb. Barb loves her job. She believes in what the company stands for. She likes the routine. She gets real satisfaction out of doing her work carefully. It's more than a job for her; she feels fulfilled.

Now, where your treasure is, there your heart is also. For all three, the job is the treasure map. For Jan the treasure is continuing the work of her mother. For Pete it's money to get started. For Barb it's a vocation. All three have perfectly good treasures. Barb will be the happiest of the three, because her treasure and her work are one, but even Pete will avoid going crazy if he remembers the real treasure: building the future. His job is the treasure map.

In these cases all three have different but wholesome reasons for doing the same job. It could be otherwise: Jan's treasure may really be her mother; she may have lost herself completely and finds all her identity in the decisions someone else makes for her. Pete's treasure may really be the money itself; he may eventually sacrifice his family in order to make a buck. Barb's treasure may really be Barb. She may be so intent on her own fulfillment that she neglects the needs of others.

When we know what our treasure is, we will be alert for the coming of the Son of Man, who comes like a thief in the night.