

CONTENTMENT

Religion, of course, does bring large profits, but only to those who are content with what they have. (First letter of Saint Paul to Timothy 6:2-12)

My parents were not wealthy, they were ordinary working-class people, yet the legacy they passed on to me and my siblings made us rich, not in a material way but spiritually. They passed on the faith which they held firm. They taught us about a loving and generous God who would always watch over us and He has. My life has been very blessed. I do not claim to deserve it nor do I feel I have earned it. When I am judged, I think it will not be just on what I have done but also on that which I have failed to do.

There was a dear parishioner who died some time ago but I remember what he used to tell us, that he was blessed with a lack of ambition. Yet, he was very highly esteemed in his profession. I thought that was strange at first but, then, reflecting on it, I realised how deep that was. In my career, my earnings were made up of a basic salary plus commission. I came to understand that if my motivation was how much commission I could earn, then I would be putting my own interests before the needs of my customers and not serving them as I should, but if I put their interests before my own, then God would make sure that the rewards would follow automatically. I tried ever since then to follow that rule and to listen carefully in order to understand my customer's needs.

Saint Paul says, "People who long to be rich are prey to temptation; they get trapped into all sorts of foolish and dangerous ambitions which eventually plunge them into ruin and destruction."

I do not think I have ever sought fame or fortune, nor have I longed to win the lottery or to own a bigger house or a bigger and better car for my life has been very blessed. I have a wife who has loved and cherished me for 65 years; in the house in which we have lived in for 57 years, we have made a home that has been full of love and laughter. We have two sons, a daughter, seven grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren in whom we are very proud. We have always welcomed those who call and those who visit, rarely go home empty-handed. My wife is a very good cook and very generous. I am not saying that life has been easy, there have been hard times, many difficulties that were hard to overcome and some sad times but we have always faced them together, supporting one another and God has always helped us find a way through. How can any of us compare our tribulations with the sacrifices that Jesus, the Son of God, suffered for us. He became one of us and lived with us. He suffered and died for us. I am content with what I have and grateful to God for all his gifts. My constant prayer is;

O Jesus, you have given me so much and I have so little to give you in return, I have only myself and I offer myself to you; all that I am, all that I have and all that I do, but I am weak, timid and sinful. Strengthen and encourage me that I may dedicate my life to you.