

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time – August 3&4, 2019 – Reflection

The wise teacher, Venerable Qoheleth, speaks to us across the ages: "Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!"

Jesus, the Rabbi and Lord, speaks to the crowd: "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

Paul, the Apostle to the World, speaks to us as bluntly as he did to the Colossians of the first century: "Seek what is above ... Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry."

And, the late, great comedian and social commentator, *George Carlin*, way back in 1986 took up the theme as he mocked our American propensity to accumulate, to stockpile, to cram every closet, every dresser drawer, every attic, every cellar, every garage, every shed with lots and lots of STUFF.

Stuff.

I got stuff.

I gotta find a place for my stuff.

That's really the meaning of life. We're born. We learn the word, "MINE". And, we spend the rest of our lives getting stuff and putting stuff in places made to hold stuff.

Little kids got stuff and they need a toy chest for their stuff.

Teens got stuff but their stuff isn't comfortable or safe in a drawer or a closet ... they gotta throw all their stuff around them ... on the floor, under the bed, on the bed, on the chair, hangin' on the doorknob, becoming a science experiment in the corner ... they gotta see their stuff, smell their stuff, sleep under their stuff ... to feel safe ... to feel alive.

Adults got stuff too. That's why they look for a house ... they need a place to put all their stuff. I mean that's what a house is ... it's just a pile of stuff with a cover on it.

And sometimes, we need to get away from home for a while. So we leave our stuff but lock the door and put on the alarm so nobody takes our stuff ... and you know they'd break in if they could and they'd take only the good stuff, not the junk you're savin' in the attic.

And what do we do when we leave our house where we keep our stuff? We go shopping to get more stuff! Soon, we have so much stuff we gotta move, get a bigger place so we can store more stuff.

So while we're looking, we put our stuff into storage and pay somebody else to take care of our stuff!

Sometimes we get invited to be somebody's guest at their house. They put us in a guest room and tell us to make ourselves at home. How are we supposed to do that? The closet is full of their stuff. The dresser

drawers are stuffed with their stuff. Where are you supposed to put your stuff when their junk is everywhere and your good stuff has no place?

How about vacation ... what a nightmare?! You go away, but whaddya gotta do, but bring stuff! You stuff two huge suitcases with the stuff you'll need; you stuff your carry-on till it weighs a ton, and you stuff your pockets with the stuff that wouldn't fit in the bags or the overhead compartment.

You get to the hotel on Waikiki in Hawaii. You drag your stuff to your room where there are more drawers and closets and shelves than you need to store your stuff. So, you gotta buy more stuff to fill up the room!

Then, you get invited for the weekend to Maui ... so ya gotta bring enough stuff for the weekend.

Now, ya got stuff all over the world: at home, in storage, at the airport in lost baggage, at Honolulu in the room, in Maui ... you're a global enterprise ... STUFF INCORPORATED!!!

Two weeks ago, we went with the Lord to the house of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. Martha was completely frazzled trying to put on the hog and make a good impression on her very special Guest. She rattled stuff. She cooked stuff. She put stuff on the table. She cleaned up stuff. She ironed stuff. She dusted stuff. All she did was worry about stuff. Jesus felt for her. He invited her to take a load off, sit down ... Martha, Martha, you're worried about so much stuff ... you really only need one thing, and I'm right here.

How about you? Ya got time for the people in your life, time to rest and relax, time to sit and talk and listen and, time for Jesus ... or does STUFF always seem to get in the way?