



Daily Reflections

September 22, 2016

Scripture

Ecclesiastes 1: 2-11

Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth,
vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!
What profit has man from all the labor
which he toils at under the sun?
One generation passes and another comes,
but the world forever stays.
The sun rises and the sun goes down;
then it presses on to the place where it rises.
Blowing now toward the south, then toward the north,
the wind turns again and again, resuming its rounds.
All rivers go to the sea,
yet never does the sea become full.
To the place where they go,
the rivers keep on going.
All speech is labored;

there is nothing one can say.
The eye is not satisfied with seeing
nor is the ear satisfied with hearing.
What has been, that will be;
what has been done, that will be done.
Nothing is new under the sun.
Even the thing of which we say, "See, this is new!"
has already existed in the ages that preceded us.
There is no remembrance of the men of old;
nor of those to come will there be any remembrance
among those who come after them.

Our Scripture Reflection

Although some consider Ecclesiastes a depressing book, it nevertheless serves an important purpose. To a world that was bloated with stuff and had forgotten about the providence of God, Ecclesiastes issues a challenge to those who need faith and hope. Today's text on the vanity of things and the seemingly monotonous nature of time leaves us scratching our head and saying humbly, "There just has to be more to all of this."

Food for your Journey

It's instructive to consider certain things that are commonly tagged with the label "vanity." Such as an old-fashioned woman's dressing table, for example (beauty as vanity). Or a "vanity press" — a publisher that will print anything for a fee (fame as vanity). "Vanity plates" are license plates imprinted with a custom message (uniqueness as vanity). Web sites offer "vanity URLs" for sale — custom Web addresses that fill pretty much the same function as vanity plates on a car.

Vanitas paintings, a genre popular in the Low Countries in the 16th and 17th centuries, are still-life compositions that include symbols such as skulls, rotting fruit, bubbles, smoke, watches and hourglasses — all symbols of the shortness of life and the inevitability of death.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Because of You, life does have meaning, life is sacred and has a purpose. Thank You, Lord, for loving me. Amen.

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