

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Peace be with you all!**

Let me begin like Martin Luther King. I have a dream that one day this parish might become so vibrant and complete with all the buildings and facilities spotless and beautiful to offer everyone his own space, where groups can meet and share their faith lives and where the vulnerable adults and the innocent children can live in protection and security. I have a dream that the young can have their field to play and children their playground to enjoy. I have a dream that I might one day hear the Lord say to this community-----you have done well, you have transformed the community of imperfect men, women, and children into the kingdom of heaven on earth for me. I am proud of all my children at Divine Mercy. But these are only my dreams. Every day I wake up to the realities that surround me and my dream seems farther and farther away from reality. There is so much to be done, too little time to do it, and few hands to spare. But most of all there is too much money involved in all this. My dreams can cost a whole lot of money. But it is not impossible to accomplish with God's grace.

The scripture readings today address one of the most sensitive and explosive issues of human existence: **MONEY, MONEY AND MONEY!** Everybody loves **money**. Everybody needs **money**. Everybody works for **money**. Everybody struggles with **money**. **Money** means so much and so many things for all people. It means freedom, survival, power, influence, control, status, respect, honor, leverage, edge, comfort, happiness, etc. You can add many other things to it and it would still spell money. **Money** is indeed a powerful force to reckon with. It influences every aspect of human life. The many decisions that people make many times depend on the availability of **money**. This value is so important in man's life that we do so many things to earn a little more of it each time.

The power of money extends beyond our own simple desires and pleasures. It can breed evil within the heart of those who become selfish and become possessed by greed. These feel so much need for money that they are even compelled to cheat, lie, steal, kill and do other crazy things for **money**. Families break up because of **money**. Husbands and wives quarrel and divorce over **money**. Friends turn into enemies because of **money**. Many use it to advance their own causes instead of the glory of God. Others use **money** as a weapon to control others. The more of it you have, the more of it you want it. So the rich want to become richer and the poor end up getting even poorer. Can you figure out why the stock markets seem to drive and determine how we spend the rest of our day? Indeed what great power money has over our lives! And it does control us.

And yet, **money** also offers us an opportunity to do **good things**. We can build magnificent churches and good homes for our children, provide shelter to the homeless, give food to the hungry, and so on. It can be a powerful means to create a better, safer environment for society. We can provide better health care, comfortable living and active lifestyles to strengthen our bodies for effective service and relationships. **Money** can be used to make dying children's wishes come true; provide decent jobs to the unemployed, care for the abandoned children. It has millions of good uses to make our world a better place. Think of what money can do to our parish community. We could have all that we want here and I could realize all those dreams I just shared with you.

Most of our human activities are driven and motivated by the desire for more **money**. We work hard to earn enough to support our families and the send our children to the best schools in the country. We try to save up enough to provide ourselves with a financially secured future with significant comfort and pleasure. For many, this means having thousands of dollars stashed in banks, stocks and bonds, million-dollar homes in the up-scale part of town, a log cabin by the lake with a beautiful view of the snowcapped mountains. Yes, the American Dream even includes fancy cars, yachts and airplanes, closets filled with designer clothes and expensive items, and a collection of fine and expensive jewelries. Our fascination and interest over the life of the rich and famous reveals our own secret desire to live out our fantasies and experience their lives. Everyone strives to reach this American dream by burying themselves in non-stop cycles of work in the hope of "**earning just a little more**". With the concept of "**opportunities are endless**" or "**you can be who you want to be if you set your heart into it,**" or even just the idea that "**there is more where this came from**" gives us the impression that life, the world and this universe has an inexhaustible supply of resources that man can possess to fill his need and his greed. And when you ask rich people what more they want, they answer, "**O, I need just a little more.**" But how much is really enough? And when does enough become too much? And who decides that?

The Scripture readings today do not really condemn **money** as the "**root of all evil**", but warn us of its potential power and grip upon our souls. It is the sin of "**greed**" that can possess the soul and only **money** can make that happen. While money indeed has the power to provide us with all that we need in life, it can also offer to fill all our wants beyond these needs. This is when money becomes a tool for evil. But when put to really good use, **money** is a tool to love and serve others with. It can build structures and communities for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And depending on the motives of our hearts money can either be a good object to pursue or an evil to avoid. Just Beware! Amen!