

“No one can serve two masters. We cannot serve God and “mammon.” Said the Lord. The word “mammon” means money that has acquired a hypnotic power and become god-like for us. We all know about the power of money in our societies. People kill for it, steal it and destroy others’ careers to get it. Money can so fascinate us that its acquisition becomes an end in itself. Many of us try to have it both ways by serving God and mammon. The Lord, however, is explicit and quite categorical about it. No one can serve two masters. It would be like someone who loves two persons. He ends up being pulled in two directions. Because, he cannot love them in the same way or at the same level, one love will probably become secondary. Many loves can occupy the human heart. But only one can be its center. A ship can have one captain. Sooner or later, one love will dominate others. One will drive our life and the rest will take a back seat.

God and mammon demand our allegiance. In many big cities big stores or shopping malls are built next to churches. And most people go to the shopping malls and spend more time in them than in their churches.

We cannot live with a dual allegiance. If our god is “mammon”, everything in our life will serve its acquisition. It will diminish everything we do and everything we are. Those who are passionate of mammon are the people who define themselves by what they consume: food, clothing, and homes as the Lord says in today’s Gospel reading. The size of their family is guided by financial considerations. Work is defined by salary. Friends and family are seen as potential clients or customers. Life is defined by what they possess. Even their faith becomes a way to make money. The service of mammon commercializes everything about them.

On the other hand, if God is at our center, everything about us is given new dignity. Our family becomes a domestic church. Our work becomes a place where we reflect Christ’s light and truth to others. Friends and families are people who journey with us through life.

If mammon is our god, anxiety permeates our life. We live in constant fear that a downturn in the economy or in our finances will cause us to lose what we have.

If God is God for us, then trust in his Providence will profoundly strengthen our life. But, this does not mean that the Lord is calling us in today’s Gospel to abandon prudence and sit back passively awaiting divine intervention to meet all needs. We need to use our intelligence that God has endowed us; in that way, we can plan for the future. We are also to trust His Providence that is present in every event, even in the economic downturn we might experience.

To which kingdom have we pledged allegiance? Is it the kingdom of “mammon” whose horizon is material and limited to years of our biological life? Or have we pledged allegiance to the Lord Jesus Whose horizon is spiritual and extending to a life that never ends?

- Which one gives our life dignity, God or mammon?

- Which one lifts the burden of sin, God or mammon?

- Which one will we trust in the evening of our life, God or mammon?

Whether we serve God or mammon does not just happen. It is a choice we make every day.