

Homily based on the readings from June 19, 2026 (2 Kings 11.1-4, 9-18, 20; Matthew 6.19-23)

*For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.* In a certain sense, the message from today's Gospel is incredibly straightforward – the treasures of this world are fragile and fleeting, while the treasures of heaven are indestructible and everlasting. It does not take a degree in moral theology to appreciate the *futility* of seeking to die with as much wealth as possible. Nevertheless, as Christians, we could all benefit from taking some time to reflect upon the *kinds* of treasures we are attempting to store up.

There are many examples we could consider, but one that comes to mind for *me* is Saint Lawrence – a deacon and martyr from the third century.

You may have heard this story before. On the orders of the Emperor Valerian, the Holy Father – Pope Saint Sixtus II – was captured and beheaded, along with six of the seven deacons of Rome. As the last surviving deacon, Lawrence had complete control over the Church's

earthly resources. He was commanded by a Roman prefect to surrender all these riches to the emperor. With what little time he had, Lawrence sold everything he could and donated the proceeds to the poor. Showing up at the appointed time, he pointed to the sick and the destitute of the city, declaring: “Here are the treasures of the Church. You see, the Church is truly rich, far richer than your emperor!” – a quippy remark that soon led to his own (uniquely gruesome) execution. Even though Lawrence certainly intended to frustrate his tyrannical oppressors, he also provided the rest of us with a valuable lesson. While the Church’s physical possessions – our holy relics, our priceless works of art, our majestic buildings – are all extremely important to our mission and ministry, they are ultimately a means to an end: caring for the spiritual and temporal needs of the people around us. *Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.*

There is another kind of treasure, though, to which we must all devote our fullest attention. It has little material value, as the world judges such things, but no object in the *universe* is more precious. I am referring, of

course, to the incomparable gift of the Holy Eucharist. As Pope Benedict reminded us back in 2008:

The Eucharist is our most beautiful treasure. It is the Sacrament *par excellence*; it ushers us into eternal life in advance; it contains the entire mystery of our salvation; it is the source and summit of the action and life of the Church.

It is unlikely that the emperor of Rome, or even the governor of Connecticut, would see much value in such a treasure. Unlike silver or gold, whose worth is readily apparent, recognizing these riches requires the eyes of faith. Rather than *hiding* this treasure – like some heirloom stored safely in a vault – it is our fundamental duty to bring it out into the open. As Christians, we must share this heavenly banquet with *anyone* who is willing to partake of it. As a starting point, though, we need to open our *own* hearts and minds to what the Eucharist truly is – to *who* it truly is. Where our treasure is, there *also* will our hearts be – in the monstrance shortly before Mass began, on this altar in just a few moments, and in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time.