

***Twenty-Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time***  
***October 19, 2025***  
***Year of the Holy Spirit***

*“Christ: My child, the highest goal of your life is union with Me in Heaven. Let your intentions throughout the day be guided by this truth. In all things be sure to stay on the path which leads to Heaven. Do not become too deeply interested in the passing desires and brief enjoyment of this earthly life.”*

*(Anthony J. Paone, S.J., My Daily Bread – A Summary of the Spiritual Life, p. 2)*

Last Sunday, we reflected upon the idea of happiness coming from honor, fame and power. As desirable as any of the three may be to someone, none can provide lasting happiness. This weekend, we will venture into the realms of pleasure, physical health and one's physical appearance. Does our happiness lie in the possession of one of these three?

(5) **Can pleasure provide us happiness?** Most people desire to experience pleasure. How each person defines pleasure is both debatable and numerous. The Church often uses the term “pleasure” to refer to those things in which our body delights. Due to the presence of “little ears” in our Mass, some activities provide pleasure, but lack joy. An experience with another might be pleasurable, delighting our body, but that same activity could become a wholly joyous occasion by substituting the other person with someone we care for deeply. For example, a trip with friends can be pleasurable. The same trip with our spouse and children can be so much more. Imagine standing before a great masterpiece of art or architecture with a casual friend as opposed to your spouse or child. Some may say: “I have a body and things that delight my body offer pleasure and offer happiness.” On the surface, this may sound solid, but the logic present is rather flimsy. Not all things which provide the body pleasure are desirable. A person may find pleasure in food, alcohol or narcotics, but these things, when abused, do more harm than the pleasure they may provide. Secondly, not all pleasures are gained through our body. One can experience pleasures which seem to speak to our spirits and not our bodies. On this point, my mind recalls beautiful works of music which, through the efforts of masterful composers, elevate our minds and spirits while our bodies remain in their seats. As an experiment, go on your computer to YouTube. Make yourself comfortable and listen to the Canon in D Major by Pachelbel or Luciano Pavarotti's rendition of Schubert's Ave Maria. You may also try watching Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker performed by The Royal Ballet. Through these and so many other great works of art, generations have experienced pleasure without the physical stimulation of their bodies. Happiness is our end. Pleasure is a means to that end. In essence, pleasure proceeds from something; something which makes us happy. Happiness is a flower. Pleasure is the smell of the flower. We delight in the smell which comes from the flower, not in the smell itself.

**(6) Can our physical health or appearance provide us happiness?** A short answer to this question would be NO. We know that as we age our physical body undergoes change. Our hair may become grey or white. Our musculature will gradually diminish. Our minds may seem jumbled and our memories cloudy. All of these are gradual changes due to who we are. And, who we are is human. That is a key point needing to be made. We are humans. We lack the longevity of the Greenland shark, the strength of the African elephant or the speed of the Peregrine falcon (diving speed can reach 240 mph). Animals can excel humans in these bodily attributes. Our happiness is not found in these. Nor is it found in our health. Our bodily health is important for our bodies are the vessels which house our souls. However, happiness is still the end in which we strive toward in good health and in bad. One point to consider, when our health is good, we may not choose to focus on things which will provide us lasting peace and happiness. Those steps we take toward happiness with God may only quicken once our physical health has been compromised. In dying, we might finally start living a life which truly matters.