

Twenty-Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
October 5, 2025
Year of the Holy Spirit

“Faith is the beginning of happiness in the mind. It is even more than this. Because faith proposes to man the possibility of attaining the vision of God, it gives man the beginning of happiness in his heart. Faith then lays the foundation of hope in the heart of man.”

(Walter Farrell, O.P., S.T.M. and Martin J. Healy, S.T.D., My Way of Life: Pocket Edition of Saint Thomas, The Summa Simplified for Everyone, p. 333)

In our reflection of last weekend, I spoke of our need to become holy. It should be the first priority of our lives. To achieve this, we must seek out various ways to assist us in choosing to become holy. As we are well aware, no man is saved solely due to his faith in God and His Goodness. Faith provides us with a peace of mind proving what God has spoken is true. As the quote above states, *“Faith then lays the foundation of hope”* and it is hope, the theological virtue following faith, which offers man happiness in his heart.

When we were children, we were told certain things would bring us happiness. Let us briefly examine a few of these to find out IF they truly do bring happiness or if they only offer us a false notion of happiness. I will approach these various things in no particular order beginning first with a question and then seeking to provide a proper answer.

(1) Can wealth bring us happiness? At first glance, it would appear that money can provide happiness. No one doubts having money, or a great deal of money, can make one’s life very easy. However, have we ever truly looked at wealth as something more than just money? I am not referring to the old adage which said one can be “wealthy in friendship.” Saint Thomas would teach that in our daily lives we encounter two forms of wealth: Natural wealth and Artificial wealth. Natural wealth is that wealth which satisfies man’s natural wants. These wants would include food, water, shelter and clothing. Natural wealth cannot provide man with happiness because its goal is man himself. These things support us because they quench a finite need. It is through this support, we are able to continue living thus allowing us to move toward the goal of our lives, which is a true infinite happiness. Concerning artificial wealth, the best example I can provide is money. Money, paper or coin, is only a man-made tool used in the purchasing of or exchanging of goods and services. Artificial wealth, money, is not sought after as an end in itself. Rather, it is procured by a person who seeks to possess a natural wealth. I work for money to purchase food, drink, shelter and clothing. Unlike natural wealth which is finite, artificial wealth is infinite; our desire may never be fully satiated. No matter how much some few possess, a person can always seek to have more. Artificial wealth is a means to an end, however, if not guided by faith and reason, it can become warped due to man’s disordered affections.

As much as wealth can benefit and sustain man, as much as it can be desired, as much as it can be possessed, we still seek something else. If you are dying of thirst in a desert with all of the money in the world in your possession, you would desire water to end this torture. It really would not matter if it was sparkling water, mineral water or tap water. You would want water. And you would want more than one glass of water. This example teaches that the accumulation of wealth (money or water) is insufficient in this situation. We still desire to possess something more. Man desires something which is always near and is always satisfying. Man desires a wealth that is true and lasting; one that opens his heart to infinite happiness.