

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

August 3, 2025

“The folly of envy”

A story can illustrate the Gospel message succinctly: The cheerful little girl named Jenny with bouncy hair was almost five. Waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, she noticed a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box. “O mommy, please, can I have them?” The mother checked out the back of the little box and replied, “They cost a dollar ninety-five. That’s almost two dollars. If you want them, you’ll have to do some extra chores. Your birthday is one week away, and maybe grandpa will give you the extra dollar.”

As soon as Jenny was home, she emptied her piggy bank and counted out 17 pennies. She did her chores after dinner and went to the neighbor to ask if she could pick dandelions for ten cents. She received the dollar from grandpa on her birthday and at last had enough money for the necklace.

Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel dressed up and grown up. She wore them everywhere—to Mass, to kindergarten, even to bed. She only took them off to go swimming or take a bubble bath.

One night, as her father finished reading her a bedtime story, he asked Jenny, “Do you love me?” She replied, “Oh, yes, daddy. I love you.” He said, “Then give me your pearls.”

“Oh, daddy, not my pearls. But you can have Princess, the white horse from my collection. She’s my favorite.”

“That’s okay, honey. Good night.”

About a week later, after story time, Jenny’s dad asked again, “Do you love me?” She replied, “Oh, yes, daddy. I love you.” He said, “Then give me your pearls.”

“Oh daddy, not my pearls. But you can have Baby Doll, the brand new one I received on my birthday.”

“That’s okay, honey. Good night.” And brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss.

A few nights later, when her father came in, Jenny was sitting on the bed with her legs crossed Indian style. As he came closer, he noticed her chin was trembling and a silent tear rolled down her cheek.

“What’s the matter Jenny?”

Jenny didn’t say anything, but lifted her hand to her dad, and when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace.

“Here, daddy, this is for you.”

With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny’s father reached out with one hand to take the dime store necklace, and with the other hand, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls, and gave them to Jenny.

He had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up the dime-store stuff so he could give her the genuine treasure.

What dime-store stuff are you willing to give up in order to inherit the genuine treasure of salvation?

God bless you.