

GOSPEL PEARLS

An excellent servant, but a bad master

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I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and

money." The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight. (Luke 16: 9-15)

Pope Leo XII said that money is an excellent servant and a bad master. Therefore, if we become masters of our wealth, it increases our ability to do good for others. If, on the other hand, we let our wealth become masters of us, we delude ourselves. We believe it is we who are using it, when in actual fact we have become slaves to the accumulation of wealth which separates us from God and our neighbour. Hence, we cannot be simultaneously be servants of God and servants of money. Our wealth, especially the use we make of it, is one of many tests God gives us in order to see if we can behave as wise and good stewards.