

## Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### *God of Mammon?*

*“You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt., 6:24)*

To understand the significance of Our Lord’s statement in today’s Gospel: “You cannot serve God and mammon,” we must know that the word “mammon” means “worldly goods.” Accordingly, Our Divine Saviour’s statement means that we cannot be loyal to God and to His commandments if our hearts are absorbed in the riches and honours and pleasures that this earth provides. We cannot foster in our hearts the spirit of the world and at the same time regard ourselves true followers of Jesus Christ. There can be no compromise; we must choose one or the other, not both.

Despite this clear assertion of Our Blessed Lord, there are many Catholics who are trying to do the impossible—to serve God and mammon at the same time. This does not mean that a Catholic is forbidden to strive for a moderate measure of worldly success and enjoy the good things of life within proper bounds. Riches, honours and pleasures can be a legitimate goal, as long as we observe God’s laws in seeking them.

But it is here that we encounter the main difficulty—to fulfil the obligation to obey faithfully all the laws of God, while seeking the goods of this world. It is not easy at times to fulfil this obligation. When people are much attached to material and temporal benefits, they are strongly tempted to overstep the boundaries laid down by the commandments. Sometimes Catholics who do this will try to persuade themselves that they still remain good Catholics even when they yield to the temptation to serve mammon.

Thus, in political life there are some Catholics who adopt the dishonest practices so common in our country and known as “graft” and yet try to salve their consciences. There are business people who do not hesitate to cheat their customers, and who would nevertheless be insulted if you implied that they are not good Catholics. There are doctors who practice medical or surgical methods at variance with God’s law, but who seem to be convinced that this does not interfere with their loyalty to the Church. There are married couples who go regularly to the sacraments, and yet are regularly violating God’s law in their marital life.

To all such inconsistent persons Our Lord says: “You cannot serve God and mammon.” They are trying to do the impossible.

### **Practical Application**

Be honest in asking yourself if you are trying to do the impossible, trying to serve both God and mammon. Are you attempting to enjoy life to the lest extent according to the world’s standards, and yet trying to persuade yourself that you are on the way to eternal life?