Fr. Dwayne’s homily follows….  

I. “If you have been raised with Christ, then seek what is above.”  

So said St. Paul to the people who lived in Colossae – and to us! “If you have been raised with Christ, then seek what is above. Think of what is above, not what is on earth.”  

This is what is called an “indicative/imperative.” What Paul is saying is that if you have been raised with Christ in baptism – then BE IT! Be Christ.  

A. There’s been a lot discussion in the media lately about Hunter Mahan, a golfer who was in the lead at the Canadian Open. When he received word that his wife had gone into labor with their first child, he left the tournament in order to be with his wife. He was potentially walking away from one million dollars!  

This caught the attention of the talking heads in the media…they were amazed that anyone would do such a thing!  

- why would he do that?  
- did he do the right thing?  
- is he crazy?  
- couldn’t he just have finished the tournament, then go to be with his wife?  

B. The day after this happened, I was listening to a popular radio talk show on which they were discussing these issues. One listener called in and suggested it was because he was choosing life over $1,000,000. Life, marriage, family are
more important to him than money.

C. So what would cause you (and me) to walk away from a million dollars? What is more important, more valuable to you than $1,000,000?

Are your priorities – as a disciple of Jesus – ordered in such a way that you would have the clarity of vision to walk away from $1,000,000?

“If you have been raised with Christ, then seek what is above.”

II. As we conclude our nine-week summer series of homilies on the nature of discipleship, our readings today are teaching us about the importance of priorities.

In the first reading, Qoheleth talks about the folly of spending our lives acquiring property – and then at our death it goes to someone else who didn’t work to acquire it. He questions – what is to be gained by all this toil and anxiety?

And in the gospel Jesus explains further that life doesn’t consist of possessions. The foolishness of such a way of life is clearly revealed in the parable about the farmer who was blessed with a bountiful harvest – and then died before he got a chance to enjoy it.

Jesus says that instead of these material things, we should seek to store up treasure in those things which matter to God.

There’s nothing wrong with having material things…with driving a nice car, having a comfortable home, having investments for our long term security.

But are these what dominate your life?

Note – the farmer in the parable was not a bad or evil man. He was probably a hard working farmer. But this became the center of his life – and not building up treasures which truly matter in the eyes of God.

Are our priorities – as a disciple of Jesus – ordered in such a way that our vision tells us that these are not the things that truly matter – that we really could be detached from them, walk away from them for the sake of bigger values?

III. What is more important is to be possessed by Christ. If you have been raised with Christ in baptism – then live as Christ!

- St. Paul tells us we should put to death all those parts of ourselves that are
earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed, lying…and put on the new self of Christ
- this is the first priority: that Christ is the center our lives. On June 23 we were challenged to put on Christ – just as we would put on a piece of clothing. When we put on Christ – live from the inside out as Christ – then Christ’s priorities become our priorities. This means everything we do: our attitudes, our decisions, our manner of speaking, the way we go through each day, our acting – everything about us comes from a heart which demonstrates the words and actions of Jesus.

When we do this, life will take on a rich and full meaning – far beyond the comforts and conveniences which the material goods of this world bring.

IV. So what is the legacy we are building for ourselves in the sight of God? Is it our attachments to the material things of this world? Or do we go beyond these things and center our focus on Christian values and virtues – qualities which can be instilled in all those around us?

V. Recently I was in conversation with a man who is dying. He said, there isn’t much that is important anymore.

The prospect of death is a reality check. It has a way of ordering our priorities for us.

VI. Being a disciple of Jesus isn’t easy. As we learn about and become Jesus’ disciples we will be stretched – we will be challenged to reach for the highest ideals and goals – to become all that we can be.

We will learn that what Jesus says is true – Life does not consist of possessions – unless, of course, that possession is Jesus Christ.

Fr. Alan’s homily follows….

I don’t usually follow sports news, but there was a story this week that caught my attention. I don’t know if you heard about it, but it was about golfer by the name of Hunter Mahan. Hunter had a two-stroke lead and was at the top of the leader board heading into the final stretch of the Canadian Open. Then Hunter received a phone call. Suddenly he dropped out of the
tournament and gave up the one million dollar prize. Why? Because his wife called saying she was in labor with their first child. Hunter had his priorities straight.

As you can imagine Hunter’s decision sparked all sorts of discussion and debate on TV and online. Should he have given up the chance at a PGA championship and a million bucks? Then, later in the week Hunter withdrew from the Bridgestone Invitational to spend time with his newborn daughter. Now I tried to imagine myself in his position, but the thought of having wife expecting a child or a golf game good enough to win a million dollars, for me are equally impossible.

But the situation does cause us to think, would I have done the same? Would I have prioritized my family over money? The readings for this weekend point out the importance of having the right priorities and the fragility of human activity. In our first reading, we hear the dismal words from Qoheleth: “All is vanity!” All is for nothing! In our second reading, St. Paul tells us to “seek what is above, not what is on earth” and our Gospel reminds us to keep our own death in the forefront of our minds in order to keep the right priorities in the way we live life.

Let’s examine for a moment at the farmer we hear about in the Gospel. Anyone who has grown up on a farm, knows farmers, or frankly has even had a garden knows that in order to get a bumper crop all the stars must perfectly align. First you need good seed, then the right kind of soil and nutrients, you need to plant the crop at the right time when the ground isn’t too wet, but then it has to get rain, but not too much, and then it needs the proper amount of fertilizer, then more rain at the proper times, just the perfect amount of heat units, oh yeah sunlight helps too. Then, if all those conditions come together you get a crop and you’re incredibly fortunate to get a bumper crop. What’s the problem? Let’s listen to a passage of this Gospel again and keep track of how many times you hear this farmer speaks of himself:

There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, “What should I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?” And he said, “This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, “Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!”’

This guy likes to talk about himself doesn’t he? Did you notice that he first question isn’t I wonder what God who has blessed me with this tremendous gift of a good harvest is calling me to do with it? No! His first question is what should I do with my harvest? He’s the one taking credit. He has forgotten all the contingencies that had to converge. He has lost sight of God and takes credit like he is God.
You know what I love about this Gospel? It reminds us that not even what we own is our own. Everything absolutely everything is first of all God’s gift. Not once does it cross his mind that his neighbors, who probably didn’t get such a great harvest, probably have plenty of storage in their barns. Do you also see the paradox of this parable? Here is a man who has just gathered a rich harvest and this night his very life will be gathered to the Lord and (apart from the bumper crop) he has no fruit to show for it. His life has yielded no fruit because he has forgotten God’s priorities.

Take a moment to think about what your top 5 priorities are. What are your top five priorities? Here are some ways to figure it out if you are really living by those priorities:

1. **First, look at your calendar.** What are the things you find scheduled there? When was the last time you scheduled time for your family? Or time for just you and your spouse? Or time just to spend with your grandkids? What is scheduled on your calendar shows what your priorities are.

2. **Secondly, walk around your house.** You fill your house with things that are important to you. If you claim that being a Catholic Christian is important to you, what in your house confirms that? What objects are the focal points when a stranger walks into your house? Do you have pictures of your family? Do you have pictures that inspire you? Do you have a crucifix? Do you have pictures of your favorite Saints? That’s actually a question I always ask when doing funeral planning: What images did the person have in their house that showed his or her faith?

3. **Thirdly, look at your checkbook.** What things do you value spending money on?

4. **A fourth/final way** you can figure out what your priorities are comes from advice a priest gave me in seminary. He gave us all a sheet of paper that had a chart for the week. He challenged us for one week to write down everything we spent time doing. If we spent 5 minutes on the internet before breakfast write it down. And he said we would discover where we are wasting time because we make time for what we value. Now I thought this was a great exercise I just never made the time to do it!

Any of these four ways will reveal what your real priorities are.

For these past nine weeks we have been looking at discipleship with Christ and what that means with our homily series “Heir Condition Your Summer.” And when we truly follow Christ as his disciples, what our priorities are will change. Our priorities will look different from the priorities our culture tells us to have. But discipleship is a process of letting go and taking up; of reexamining and adjusting our priorities. **Discipleship is a lifelong process.**

Discipleship is a lifelong process that calls us to:

1. die to ourselves and rise with Christ (week 1),
2. discipleship calls us to acknowledge our sins (week 2),
3. to cloth ourselves with Christ (week 3),
4. to yoke ourselves to Christ and submit to his freedom (week 4),
5. to share in his mission and the power of the Holy Spirit (week 5),
6. to lower ourselves to those in need even if it means personal risk (week 6),
7. to patiently sit at the feet of Jesus and take on the posture of a disciple (week 7),
8. to respond to God our Father with prayer (week 8),
9. and lastly this week to seek the peace of mind which comes from entrusting our entire lives to Christ as his disciples and letting that relationship determine our priorities.

It’s been a long a journey and to quote The Carpenters: “we’ve only just begun.” We’ve just scratched the surface, but our journey of discipleship will call us to rinse and repeat all these areas of discipleship we’ve examined.

You know in the eyes of some, Hunter Mahan might look like a fool, walking away from his own personal and career gain to see a child he would see the rest of his life, but that’s a perfect example of how our God treats us. This Eucharist proves that God holds nothing back. He makes our salvation his number one priority. Jesus on the cross reveals a Father’s love that holds nothing back for his own personal gain, but offers us everything. He offers us everything we need, a heavenly inheritance, if only we allow him to condition us as his heir.