

# GRIST

Diocese of New Ulm      Social Concerns Office      December, 2008

## X. Enough Is Enough

The more wealth one has, the more one wishes to acquire; and no matter how many new items one gets, one always believes that one is lacking something else. Profit whets the appetite of the avaricious, and never appeases it. Covetousness increases by leaps and bounds: the higher one climbs, the keener becomes one's desire to climb even higher.      *St. Ambrose*

The greatest crimes are caused by surfeit, not by want. Men do not become tyrants so as not to suffer cold.      *Aristotle*

How far, O rich, do you extend your senseless avarice? Do you intend to be the sole inhabitants of the earth? Why do you drive out the fellow-sharers of nature, and claim it all for yourselves? The earth was made for all, rich and poor, in common. Why do you rich claim it as your exclusive right?      *St. Augustine*

Nothing has been better proven than this maxim: *that one succeeds in having too much only by causing others not to have enough.*      *Francois-Noel Babeuf*

Above all things, good policy is to be used that the treasure and monies in a state be not gathered into few hands.      *Francis Bacon*

All that grows ceases to do so when it reaches its normal size, but the money of the greedy never stops growing.      *St. Basil the Great*

To finally open one's hands, which held the wrong things...He no longer *grasps* the most frightful thing: it has dissolved his grip... Everyone ought to watch himself eating... The eating man has less and less compassion... To find out, with each person, whom he envies ...I have a terribly accurate knowledge of

people. I am interested in what refutes this knowledge. I would like to turn a usurer into a benefactor, a bookkeeper into a poet. I am interested in the leap, the surprising metamorphosis...Only the paltry, superfluous, shameless wishes are fulfilled, and the great ones, the ones worthy of a human being, remain unfulfilled.      *Elias Canetti*

Luxury and avarice – these pests have been the ruin of every state.      *Cato*

To be rich is a form of intoxication: it spells forgetfulness. In fact, that is what one wants riches for: to forget...The latest mechanical contrivances, above all, appliances even more showy was what they wanted, and at once... In the sudden abundance of ease, a marvelous megalomania is all over you before you know it.      *Celine*

There are two large sections to society: those with more dinners than appetite, those with more appetite than dinners...In renouncing the world and fortune, I have found happiness, tranquility, health, even wealth; and whatever the proverb says, I conclude that he who leaves the game wins it.      *Chamfort*

Renunciation, even at this late date, can work. The world, if it has a future, has an ascetic one.      *Bruce Chatwin*

Hands are not to be opened to gather together, but open to give.      *Chomas (Desert Father)*

Renunciation is the only kind of action that is not degrading...Everything, in the end, comes down to desire or to the absence of desire. The rest is nuance.      *E. M. Cioran*

The song "If I Had a Hammer" is geared toward people who don't have a hammer. Maybe before I had a hammer I thought I'd hammer in the morning and hammer in the evening. But once you get a hammer, you find you don't really hammer as much as you thought you would. *Ellen DeGeneres*

There are three wants which can never be satisfied: that of the rich, who wants something more; that of the sick, who wants something different; and that of the traveler, who says, "Anywhere but here." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Nothing is enough to the man for whom enough is too little. *Epicurus*

Malice may be sometimes out of breath, envy never. *Halifax*

We can never have enough of that which we really do not want. *Eric Hoffer*

Whatever is not nailed down is mine.  
Whatever I can pry loose is not nailed down.  
– ascribed to *Collis P. Huntington*

In a consumer society,  
there are inevitably two kinds of slaves:  
the prisoners of addiction  
and the prisoners of envy. *Ivan Illich*

Riches are not forbidden, but the price of them is...Don't say, then, "I am spending my own, and of my own I live finely." It is not your own, but common to you and your neighbors; just as the sun is common, the air, the earth, and all the rest. You may indeed say, "But how are we to divest ourselves of our riches? How can one given over to the love of money get rid of such a violent passion?" One will be able to do so if one begins by getting rid of whatever is superfluous. *St. John Chrysostom*

The world is interested only in making money, enjoying life and getting ahead at all costs, even, unfortunately, insolence.  
*Pope John XXIII*

He who knows how to be poor knows everything. *Michelet*

The only vice that I perceive in the universe is Avarice; all the others, whatever name they be known by, are only variations, degrees of this one. *Morelly*

We are all rather blessed in our deprivations if we let ourselves be. *Flannery O'Connor*

If you want to know what God thinks of money, just look at the people He gave it to.  
*Dorothy Parker*

"That dog is mine," the child says; "that is my place in the sun." Here is the beginning and the image of the usurpation of all the earth.  
*Blaise Pascal*

Before we set our hearts too much on anything, let us examine how happy are those who already possess it. *La Rouchfoucauld*

To suppose, as we all suppose, that we could be rich and not behave the way the rich behave, is like supposing that we could drink all day and stay sober. *L. P. Smith*

Have much and be confused. *Tao te Ching*

The only gift is giving to the poor;  
all else is exchange. *Thiruvalluvar*

Ambition is a form of foresight. The aging man will need a little more money, a little more power and prestige to compensate for what is dwindling, darkening, falling, going to sleep, and drying up...What can one wish for that isn't naïve? If it were not naïve, we couldn't bring ourselves to wish for it. For who would wish for the consequences of what he wants? Nobody would wish for, could possibly desire, the consequences of what he wishes for.  
*Paul Valery*

In this world there are only two tragedies.  
One is not getting what one wants and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst, the last is the real tragedy. *Oscar Wilde*

You can't have everything.  
Where would you put it? *Steven Wright*