

# Mega Millions and the big letdown

When I was leaving work on Friday, my co-worker asked me if I would come back to work if I won the Mega Millions. Without hesitation, I informed her that of course I would come back for the dedication of the building erected with my donations and named after me, but I probably would not be back before the dedication.

Mega Millions-mania gave the country a moment to step back from our daily humdrum and dream, but when you look closely at the lottery, or any form of gambling, it is a pretty sorry institution. The lottery is not hard to criticize as a regressive tax on people who are bad at math or by showcasing the winners whose lives were destroyed as in quick succession they lost their family, friends, and finally, the money. That's too easy. I find the most dangerous part of the lottery is the damage done to the millions of Americans who play it to escape reality.

Most people can relate to what I experienced last week. From the moment I brought my ticket to the time I found out that I did not win, my mind was racing with all the things I could do with \$640 million. I would do "good things" with the money, right? Well, that is not the point.

In the trance-like state that the possibility of millions upon millions leaves us in, we lose perspective. We think that our problems can be solved with a big check, failing to realize money brings more problems than solutions. It is hard to imagine the cross that comes with wealth, but only look at the lives of the wealthy and famous.

The tickets burning a hole in our wallets cloud our judgment. We forget that the things that really make us happy - our family, our friends, our home and our faith - are right in front of us, yet they are mentally placed on the back burner to indulge in the possibilities of endless money.

Our purpose, so succinctly stated in the Baltimore Catechism, is to know, serve, and love God. We were not created to dream about being millionaires. The big letdown that followed the big daydream is, perhaps, a good time to collectively release ourselves from imaginings of yachts, mansions and endless vacations.

The next time your mind starts to wander do not think about how you would spend

money that you do not have, instead think about how you can give away what you already possess. That is love. That is the path to true happiness.