

Too much wealth, greed could compromise one's salvation

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy - Too much wealth and greed could "seriously compromise" one's salvation, Pope Benedict XVI said, adding that the real treasure humanity should strive for is Christ.

It is a thing of "wisdom and virtue to not set one's heart on the things of this world, because everything passes, everything can suddenly come to an end," he said before reciting the Angelus prayer Aug. 5.

While one's earthly possessions and material wealth can be a necessity that are good in and of themselves, they are "not to be considered an absolute good," he told those gathered in the courtyard of the papal summer residence south of Rome.

Wealth "does not ensure salvation, rather it could even seriously compromise it," he said.

Christ, the pope said, warned people to guard against greed and becoming attached to earthly possessions.

"The true treasure we Christians have to tirelessly seek out lies in 'what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God,'" he said, quoting a Bible passage from Paul's Letter to the Colossians.

He invited people to pray to Mary for help in living with moderation so that "we are not dominated by avarice and egoism," but are constantly looking for what is good and valuable in the eyes of God.

After the Angelus prayer, the pope praised the ecumenical contributions of the recently deceased leader of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Patriarch Teoctist, who died July 30, was a "noble pastor who loved his church and made a positive contribution to relations between Catholics and Orthodox," Pope Benedict said.

He said he warmly remembered the patriarch "with esteem and affection" and recalled that his landmark visits with Pope John Paul II also reflected the patriarch's "clear witness to his commitment" to Christian unity.