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I love stopping to look in the window of a jewellery shop – the precious stones glitter and sparkle, and you can tell the expensive ones because their price tags are hidden. So a news item about a jewellery sale caught my eye- the collection of Heidi Horten, an Austrian billionaire, is on display today in Christie's London, on its world tour prior to auction next month. I followed the online link to see the breathtakingly beautiful catalogue. She must have had some jewellery box – there's a huge ruby and diamond ring, a perfectly matched triple rope of natural pearls with an 11.5 carat pink diamond clasp, the oldest known diamond, a 90 – nine-o - carat briolette – that's a pear drop shape- once owned by Eleanor of Aquitaine – and many more– the 700 items are exquisite, but also totally out of reach of us normal folk. And even if I could afford one, to be honest it would cause me so much worry I wouldn't enjoy it. I'm also not sure I could really tell the difference between a real diamond and a fake one- they both look pretty glittery to me.

Seeing all those beautiful gems put me in mind of the many references in the bible to gold and precious stones as items of value to be compared with goodness, wisdom or virtue. I thought of Lawrence, one of my favourite saints, who lived in Rome in 258 AD, when his boss, Pope Sixtus, and all the bishops, were arrested and executed without trial by the Christian-persecuting Emperor Valerian. Lawrence was the pope's treasurer, and they granted him 3 days to get all the Church's money together to be confiscated. Lawrence used the time to secretly distribute everything valuable to the needy. When the soldiers came back for him, he'd assembled all those who relied on the church for help - the destitute, the outcast, disabled, sick and maimed - and proclaimed 'behold the treasures of the church, which is rich, far richer than your emperor'. This wonderful defiance led to martyrdom, of course – but what a message he gave about true value.

This auction is happening because sadly, Heidi Horten died last year aged 81- but the proceeds, estimated to be the biggest ever at £130million, will support public access to her Vienna art gallery, and medical charities, so the treasures will enhance lives in a different way.

The good news is that the jewellery auction doesn't start till May so there's still time to save up. I think I could just about run to a catalogue and enjoy the pictures!

Link to the Auction! [The World of Heidi Horten | Christie's \(christies.com\)](#)