

## Homily of Twenty-Six Sunday in Ordinary Time of Year A, 2020

Ezekiel 18:25-28; Psalm 25:4-9; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21:28-32

In the Gospel, the first son who replied to his father, “I will not,” afterwards changed his mind and did his father’s will. But the second son who said “Yes, sir” to the father did not do his father’s will. Jesus used the parable to address the chief priests and the elders who refused to accept him as the savior sent by God, although they were God’s Chosen People. The second son represents them. While the first son represents the tax collectors and prostitutes who believed in Jesus and repented. The Gospel helps us to understand the first reading. The Jewish leaders were the virtuous person who turned away from virtue to commit iniquity, and the tax collectors and prostitutes were the wicked who turned away from wickedness.

The readings do not stop at telling us what happened in the Old Testament and during the time of Jesus. The readings are an invitation to us to examine the way and manner we live out our religious and civic callings and responsibilities. We make all kinds of promises, oaths, vows, covenants, and agreements when we accept our various callings and responsibilities. Sometimes, we are true to them. Many times we fall short of them.

St. Paul, in the second reading, instructs us that to be true to our callings and responsibilities, we are to have in us the same attitude that is in Jesus Christ: he did nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory. Rather, he emptied and humbled himself, and was obedient to God to the point of death on a cross.

We can name, from the readings, four vices that make us fall short of our callings and responsibilities, and cause us to commit iniquity. The vices are pride, vainglory, selfishness and disobedience. These vices have also brought the down-fall of many people. Therefore, in order to preserve our life, we are to keep away from the vices. Because of Christ’s humility, obedience and selflessness, “God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name...” Therefore, if we embrace these virtues, God will also raise us to greater heights.

We read in the first reading, “When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity and dies, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die.” There are many instances of people who started very well, then veered off to bad ways, then ended badly. There are, also, instances of people who changed from their evil ways, and God raised them to greater heights.

The first son replied, “I will not,” but afterwards changed his mind and went.” This son teaches us to reflect over our decisions and actions, know when we are in error and accept necessary corrections. Humility, obedience, and selflessness enable us to do this. But pride, vainglory, selfishness and disobedience keep us unrepentant and blind to truth.

The second son replied, “Yes, Sir,” but did not go.” Broken promises, oaths, vows, covenants, and agreements have left us with a broken world, broken countries, a wounded Church, broken institutions, broken communities, broken homes, broken marriages, broken relationships, broken friendships, broken confidence, and broken hearts. Many people are in much distress and pain caused by broken promises, oaths, vows, covenants, and agreements. We pray for mending and healing of our brokenness.

Jesus teaches us in Matthew 5:37, “Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.” And in John 8:32, he says, “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” May we be people of integrity whose yes means yes, and no means no. May we be true to our callings and responsibilities. May truth set us and our world free. Amen.

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