

## Homily of Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C, 2022

Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113:1-2, 4-8; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13

Amos prophesied in Israel about the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. At that time, Israel enjoyed material prosperity. Unfortunately, with the material prosperity were corruption, injustice, oppression of the poor, and unfaithfulness to God. The unfortunate situation is captured by Amos' words in the first reading, "When will the new moon be over, you ask, that we may sell our grain, and Sabbath, that we may display the wheat? We will diminish the ephah, and add to the shekel, and fix our scales for cheating! We will buy the lowly for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals, even the refuse of the wheat we will sell." This passage shows the dishonesty of political, economic, and religious leaders, and the decadence in the society. The dishonesty of rulers and leaders is a huge problem in our world today.

One of the priests, Amaziah, unable to take in Amos' prophecies lied to King Jeroboam, "Amos has conspired against you within the house of Israel; the country cannot endure all his words. For this is what Amos says: 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be exiled from its land.'" Then, the priest fumed at Amos, "Off with you, seer, flee to the land of Judah and there earn your bread by prophesying! But never again prophesy in Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary and a royal temple." Here is a priest bearing false witness against God's prophet and driving him away! Wow!!! Let us pray for religious leaders that they may lead a life worthy of their calling (Ephesians 4:1).

In the Gospel, Jesus shows that dishonesty and corruption are not only a problem with political, economic, and religious leaders, but are a problem everywhere. In the parable, when the dishonest steward was about to be fired, he became even more dishonest and infested his dishonesty on more people (his master's debtors). If bad people turn their energy and craftiness to doing good, hardship and suffering will disappear from our society.

We spend much time and energy to clamor and lament about the dishonesty and corruption in our political, economic, judiciary, and religious systems and establishments. We know, of course, that dishonesty and corruption are evident in everywhere. Therefore, we need to self-examine our performance in our various responsibilities. How honest are we to our responsibilities in our families? In our jobs? In our various relationships and transactions? How honest are we to God who has blessed us so much? Jesus says to us, "The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones." Jesus' saying brings to mind a rule of caution that says that a person who testifies falsely about one matter is capable of testifying falsely about other matters. Dishonesty is at its worst when it is masked in hypocrisy; like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

The master was amazed at the craftiness of the dishonest steward, which made Jesus to say, "The children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than the children of light." Unfortunately, many times, honest people lack courage, firmness, and exuberance.

St. Paul appeals to us in the second reading to pray that leaders and everyone may live honestly, since, as we reflected above, dishonesty is not only a problem with the leadership. "I ask for supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity."

Honesty opens many doors; while dishonesty closes many doors. Honesty guides; but dishonesty leads astray (Proverbs 11:3). Honesty creates positive energy; but dishonesty creates negative energy. Dishonesty is destructive. According to William Shakespeare, "No legacy is so rich as honesty."

O Lord, grant us the grace of honesty. Amen.

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