

Homily of Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Year 2023 (Father's Day)

Exodus 19:2-6; Psalm 100:1-3, 5; Romans 5:6-11; Matthew 9:36-10:8

Tribute to Fathers:

My father did not always have to tell me how to live; he lived and let me watch him do it. – Clarence Kelland

Nothing has brought me more peace and content in life than simply being a good husband and father. – Frank Abagnale

The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. – Theodore Hesburgh

Fatherhood has taught me about unconditional love, reinforced the importance of giving back, and taught me how to be a better person. - Naveen Jain

Becoming a father increases your capacity for love and your level of patience. – Kyle Maclachlan

My greatest achievement is my children and my family. It is about being a good father and a good husband. – David Beckham

One of the greatest gifts my father gave me - unintentionally - was witnessing the courage with which he bore adversity. – Ben Okri

It is easier for a father to have children than for children to have a real father. – Pope John XXIII

Whoever spares the rod (discipline) hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them. – Proverbs 13:24

Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death. – Proverbs 19:18

Kindness to a father will not be forgotten; it will serve as a sin offering – it will take lasting root. ... Those who neglect their father are like blasphemers; those who neglect their mother are accursed by their Creator. – Sirach 3:14 & 16

We thank God for the gift of our fathers. They are our pillars! What can we do without them? God bless our fathers. Amen.

The first reading presents to us the man Moses, who was a great messenger and servant of God. His role in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt is well known. The first reading, taken from Exodus 19, is Moses' role as an intermediary between God and the Israelites in preparing the Israelites to receive the Commandments and the Covenant. An x-ray of the entire chapter is helpful.

Verse 3, Moses went up to God.

Verse 7, Moses came down and related to the people all that God commanded him to say.

Verse 8, Moses brought back to God the people's response.

Verse 9, God told Moses to go and have the people sanctify themselves.

Verse 14, Moses came down from the mountain and had the people sanctified.

Verse 20, God summoned Moses to the mountain.

Verse 21, God sent him to the people.

Verse 24, and to bring up Aaron.

Verse 25, Moses went down to the people...

We can only imagine how it was for Moses climbing up and down the mountain according to the mind of God. Moses is an example of what it means to be a true, loyal, obedient, patient messenger and servant of God. That is why the Bible calls Moses a friend of God whom God spoke with face to face (Exodus 33:11). Moses' relationship with God is a challenge to us regarding our patience and obedience to God and our patience and obedience to earthly authorities and to one another.

The second reading shows that Jesus played a greater role than Moses. Jesus is a higher intermediary who was "obedient to death, even on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). Jesus, patiently, went through his passion. Moses was an intermediary between God and the Israelites. Jesus is the intermediary and the mediator between God and human beings. St. Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5-6 writes, "There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, ... who gave himself as a ransom for all." The second reading concludes, "Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life" (Romans 5:11). Jesus' life of submission to God's will and sacrifice is a challenge to us. How submissive am I to God's will? How obedient, patient, and self-giving am I in my relationship with God and people?

We read in the gospel that when Jesus saw the crowd, "his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so, ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest....' Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness."

From this Sunday until the Solemnity of Christ the King and the Advent season, the weekdays' and Sundays' gospel readings tell us about the earthly ministry of Jesus. As he summoned his apostles, so he summons us and gives us authority to walk with him and to imitate him. When we hear, "... ask the master of the harvest to send out

laborers for his harvest...;" in as much as we pray for an increase in the number of ordained and professed ministers, we must realize that we are all called to discipleship. We are the new Chosen People. We are God's possession. We are a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. We are the new Moses, God's messengers and servants. We are Christ's new disciples whom he has chosen and given authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. We are entrusted with the message of salvation and the ministry of reconciliation.

Jesus concludes his admonition in today's gospel with the following words, "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (Matthew 10:8). These words are a judgement on corrupt political and economic officials who enrich themselves by denying the people what freely belongs to them and by stealing what freely belongs to the people. The words of Jesus are a judgement on "men and women" of God who steal and extort from vulnerable and naive worshippers and adherers. The words of Jesus are, also, a judgement on anyone who cheats and steals in the performance of his or her transactions and responsibilities.

Self-evaluation:

- What has happened to the authority given to me? Where is the authority felt and what is the impact?
- How have I responded to the call to holiness?
- Am I God's possession, or has something else has possessed me?
- Am I a true, obedient, and dedicated messenger? Or, have trials of life frustrated me and upset me, and made me abandon the call?
- Moses and Jesus were intermediaries. Can I be an intermediary for good causes?
- Can I be God's instrument of healing, of peace and reconciliation, and of driving out evil spirits?
- Am I truthful in my dealings?

Jesus's heart was moved with pity when he saw the troubled and abandoned crowd. May his heart be moved with pity for many of us who are even more troubled and abandoned than the crowd of his time. In his pity, may he come to our assistance. Amen. Let us prayerfully and in faith present our troubles and abandonments to him.

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