

Homily of Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, 2025

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 8th 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'" (Amos 8:5). This passage shows the dishonesty of political, judicial, 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" (Amos 7:10-13). Here is a priest telling lies against God's prophet and driving him away! Wow!!! Certainly, there are many 'Amaziah' religious leaders in our world. Let us pray for our religious leaders that they may lead lives worthy of their calling (Ephesians 4:1); and that they may be beacons of light in our dark world.

In the Gospel, Jesus shows that dishonesty and corruption are not only a problem with leaders but are a problem everywhere. In the parable, when the dishonest steward was about to be fired, he became even more dishonest. He infested his dishonesty on more people (his master's debtors). That is the contaminating adverse effects of evil.

While we spend time and energy criticizing, clamoring, and lamenting about the dishonesty and corruption of our leaders and rulers, and in our systems and establishments, we, also, need to self-examine our performances in our various responsibilities. How honest are we to our responsibilities in our families? in our jobs? in our various relationships? in our 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."

Dishonesty corrupts the mind and produces lying tongue since an unrepentant dishonest person tells more and more lies to cover up his/her dishonesty. Dishonesty is at its worst when it is masked with 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." This is to say that many times, honest people who are supposed to be "children of light" lack courage, firmness, and enthusiasm. If "children of this world" turn their energy and craftiness to doing good, hardship and suffering will disappear from our society.

St. Paul, appeals to us in the second reading to pray that leaders and everyone may live honestly since dishonesty is not only a problem with leaders. “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” (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

We have a common saying that honesty is the best policy! William Shakespeare writes, “No legacy is so rich as honesty.” Honesty and dishonesty have rewards and consequences:

Honesty opens many doors. Dishonesty closes many doors.

Honesty guides. Dishonesty misguides.

Honesty goes a long way. Dishonesty goes nowhere and leads to failure.

Honesty builds up. Dishonesty destroys.

Honesty brings peace. Dishonesty brings conflicts.

Honesty brings progress. Dishonesty brings regress.

Honesty brings delight. Dishonesty brings detest.

Honesty liberates. Dishonesty burdens.

Honesty heals. Dishonesty sickens.

Honesty brings blessings. Dishonesty denies blessings.

Jesus says, “Blessed are the pure (*honest*) in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). Grant us, O Lord, the grace of honesty that we may see God in one another now, and see him as he truly is when you take us with you. Amen.

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