

Homily of Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

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.’” This passage shows the dishonesty and decadence of political, economic and religious leaders.

One of the priests, Amaziah, unable to take in Amos’ scolds reported 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!

In the Gospel, Jesus shows that dishonesty and corruption are also 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 in our society.

We clamor always about the dishonesty and corruption in our political, economic, judiciary and religious systems and establishments. The dishonesty and corruption are evident in every aspect. However, we need to do self-examination on how we perform in our various “very small matters.” How honest are we to our responsibilities in our families? How honest are we to our responsibilities in our jobs? How honest are we to our various relationships and transactions? How honest are we to God who has blessed us so much? Jesus says to each one of 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 is at its worst when it is masked in hypocrisy, like a wolf in sheep 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.” If the children of light (honest people) are as smart and clever as children of this world (dishonest people), the world will be a better place.

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.”

Let us try to be honest. Honesty opens many doors; while dishonesty closes many doors. Honesty guides, but dishonesty destroys (Proverbs 11:3). Honesty creates positive energy; while dishonesty creates negative energy. According to William Shakespeare, “No legacy is so rich as honesty.” Reward from dishonesty is like a leaking cistern.

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