

25th Sunday in Ordinary time C/2007

In our world we praise the clever financial directors and analysts who are able to make good placement of money in maximizing the profits, who generate benefits and make companies competitive. While we praise such people, we wonder at what price they come to such success? Sometimes, companies make profits through the relocation of industries or restructuration, but through which whole families are thrown into unemployment and misery. At times, they abuse their commercial power and get rich at the expense of the poor people. Success in business is something desirable, but it can easily lead to desire for more, often regardless of the rights and the needs of others.

It is such a situation that Amos denounces in the first reading. In fact, there is a truth we cannot deny, namely that some riches are obtained at the expense of the poor. For Amos, those who exploit the poor and abuse them, and do not care for the rights and the needs of their fellow humans, run the risk of being rejected by God. Why is it so? Because, God identifies himself with the poor. In this sense, whoever cares for the poor cares for God. Whoever cheats the poor cheats God.

If the situation is so, what shall we do to make good use of the goods of this world? In the Gospel Jesus provides us with some principles. The first is the principle of urgency. For, Jesus, indeed, we live in a situation of urgency, where we are called to make a decision immediately and without any delay, for our good. Something can happen to us quite suddenly which can change the whole of life: think of a serious illness, an accident, a familial crisis or a conflict at the world scale, but in which we are involved. We have to be ready against any case.

At this point, the parable of the Gospel speaks to us. The manager of the Gospel, pushed by the circumstances, had to make an urgent decision. He knew that he was now in a tight corner, where there was no way out, because no job meant to him no salary; and no salary meant no future at all.

By falsifying the account of his master toward his debtors, he creates for himself a way out of his difficult situation. The debtors will never forget his generosity, and will certainly feel bound up to welcome him in their homes. In fact, what the manager has done was to renounce a profit he would have had on the money from the debts of his master in order to build good relationships for the future.

In other words, the manager is generous with the money of his master. The master praises him, because instead of squandering as he did before, he is able to build strong relationships that will never be destroyed. That astuteness and ability in dealing with the things of this world, that is what we should have at the spiritual level. It is not a question of praising dishonesty as though it is a virtue; there is more.

The lesson is that as Christians we should all do our best to succeed in our spiritual life, as do those in human business. If only people would give as much attention and time to things concerning eternal life, as they do in human affairs, they would be much better human beings.

The second is the principle of solidarity. In fact, God has given us all the goods we enjoy in this world, not to use them selfishly, but to share them with the needy. That is how we should use money to build friendships with others who are less fortunate. In this sense, when the rich help the poor in this world, the poor will help the rich, too, in the world to come. In the same way, true wealth does not consist in what people keep for themselves, but in what they give away, because whoever gives to the poor gives to God.

Once again, there is no question of condemning money as though it is something bad. What is at stake is that it should not be used selfishly and only for ourselves, but also for our fellows, in doing good to others. How many of us are grateful to our better-off friends and benefactors who have provided with funds to support churches, schools, hospitals, people in need, etc. Their generosity has brought change and improvement of situations. Money creates responsibility toward the less fortunate, and we should not forget it.

The third principle is the principle of giving the best of our self in our service. Jesus says, whoever is trustworthy or dishonest in small things will be also trustworthy or dishonest in great things. This is a very serious principle, because the way of fulfilling a small task is the best proof of fitness or unfitness to be trusted with a bigger task. That is not only true in human business; it is also true for eternity. In other words, what we get in heaven depends on how we use the things of the earth. Moreover, Jesus reminds us that we are the stewards of the goods God has given us. Even the things we have acquired through our hard work come from God. For that we have to use them responsibly.

The last is the principle of exclusivity. Jesus states it by saying, “No servant can serve two masters”. In our society, it is possible to work for two people at the same time, for instance working in a shop during the day and ushering at a sports arena at night. That is not conflicting at all; it is even interesting because it increases our income. But with God, we have to make a choice. To serve God can never be a part-time job. Once we decide to serve him, it is all our energy and all our being we have to give him. That is why the greatest of the commandments speaks of loving him with the whole of our heart, our mind, our strength, etc. God is the most exclusive of the masters. Either we are with him, or we are not.

To understand all these principles and to put them into practice is difficult. That is why we need to pray for God’s guidance, as St Paul suggests. We pray also for those who are in charge of finances that they put human relationships and needs above economic interests. Let us pray that by receiving the Eucharist we all receive the inexhaustible riches of God in which each one is invited to partake. May God bless you all!



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