

Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time C2022

Let me start this homily with some observation on our country. The USA is a country of business and everywhere the entrepreneurial spirit reigns. Every day a new business is born somewhere; perhaps too every day some business dies somewhere.

A business is good when it is successful. The success of a business depends on many factors like the intelligence of the manager, the dynamism of the workers, the capacity to adapt to the changing market and environment, the ability to generate and maximize the profits, etc.

Whatever might be its nature and status, a business, however, can be so obsessed with profit and benefit that it forgets the simple question of justice and human rights in its management. It is such a situation the prophet Amos is denouncing in the first reading.

In fact, the prophet denounces those who pretend to be religious and observe scrupulously the holy days of obligation while practicing injustice against their fellows and the poor. For Amos, God will never forget such a mistreatment and one day he will reject such people.

But, why would God do such a thing for people who did not offend him directly? Because God identifies himself with the poor and the needy; they are all created in his image. Therefore, whoever cares for God should care for the needy and the poor. Whoever cheats on the poor and the needy cheats equally on God. Moreover, because God himself is the creator of all the things in the world, all the possessions people enjoy in the world are his gifts to them. Those people are not their own bosses, but rather the stewards of his many gifts to them. What is expected from a steward is not the squandering of the wealth of his master, but rather a good management.

Then, we understand the whole stake of the manager of today's Gospel. The manager, indeed, is reported to his boss for squandering his property. In order to put an end to that situation, his boss decides to fire him. Aware of what is about to happen to him, the manager makes a financial arrangement with the debtors of his master.

He alleviates their debts so that they might be favorable to him after the loss of his job. What he does, in fact, is to falsify the entries in the account book of the business so that the debtors pay less than what they normally owe. In that sense, he shows himself more generous with the money of his boss, but for the profit he wants to reap for himself later.

Why is Jesus telling this parable? Because he wants to teach us something about the kingdom of God. First of all, Jesus invites us to realize that we live in a situation of urgency, where we are summoned to make an immediate decision for our eternal salvation. If the manager has renounced an immediate profit he would have had on the money from the debts of his master in order to build good relationships for the future, how much more shall we do whatever is in our power for the benefit of our salvation?

That astuteness in the management of the business is an appeal to us that we too, as Christians must be clever in dealing with the things of our soul. We have to use all our abilities and skills in order to succeed in our spiritual life like those in human business.

If the master commends this bad manager, it is not because he appreciates his dishonesty, but because instead of squandering his money as he did before, he is able

to build with it strong relationships that will serve him later. That is what we too have to do for our eternal salvation with the things we possess in this world.

Second, Jesus invites us to realize that we have to live in solidarity with our fellow human beings. In fact, God has blessed us with many gifts in this world. Some of us are better off than others. There is a reason for all that; it is so that we share our life and our goods with the less fortunate and the needy. For that reason, we have to use our material goods for charity and for building friendships with those who have nothing. When the rich help the poor in this world, they build a treasure in heaven.

As you can see, the point of the parable is not the condemnation of material possessions or money as though it is something bad. What is at stake is the conviction that we should not live selfishly, but in solidarity with our fellows, in doing good to them. This is so true that we have been grateful to many 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 in the churches and in the world. That is why it is legitimate to say that money creates responsibility toward the less fortunate and the needy.

Third, Jesus invites us to give the best of ourselves in every task we undertake. The truth behind all this is that whoever is trustworthy or dishonest in small things will also be trustworthy or dishonest in great things. The way of fulfilling a small task is the best proof of our fitness or unfitness to be trusted with a bigger task. What is true here for human business is also true for eternal life. If that is so, it means that what we get in heaven depends to a large extent on how we use the things of this world.

Lastly, Jesus wants us to realize that we have to make a choice of serving his Father and not our money. By saying, “No servant can serve two masters”, he is inviting us to make God our guiding principle whenever we deal with money or do business. He reminds us that God is the most exclusive of the masters. Either we are with him, or we are against him.

Let me now conclude: There is a reason why we are all differently gifted. Be a channel of God’s blessing to others with the gifts you have received from God. Act always in solidarity with the needy and the poor, regardless of your own misery, you will build bridge and relationship that will serve you on the last day. Should you open up to God in prayer, your prayer should be dedicated to all the people so that each, in his own way, may receive from God consolation in time of need, healing in time of sickness and blessing in time of joy. Do not be blinded by material possessions, but be prudent and clever in handling them. Finally, put God above everything and you will be happy, if not in this world, at least in the other one. God bless you!

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



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