

HOMILY for 25th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year C

This Sunday's Gospel talks about an "enterprising" manager. Reflecting on that, I'm reminded of this brand new cute story that I'd like to share with you.

Before going to Europe on business, a man drove his Rolls-Royce to a downtown New York City bank & went in to ask for an immediate loan of \$5,000. The loan officer, taken back, requested collateral & so that man said, "Well then, here are the keys to my Rolls-Royce." The loan officer promptly had the car driven into the bank's underground parking for safe keeping, & gave him \$5,000.

Two weeks later, the man walked through the bank's doors, & asked to settle up his loan & get his car back. "That will be \$5,000 in principal, & \$15.40 in interest?" The loan officer said. The man wrote out a check & started to walk away. "Wait, sir," the loan officer said, "while you were gone, I found out you are a millionaire. Why in the world would you need to borrow \$5,000?"

The man smiled & replied, "Where else would I park my Rolls-Royce in Manhattan for two weeks & pay only \$15.40?"

That is one good "enterprising" guy! Anyway, after hearing this Sunday's Gospel, I recall the saying, "Two wrongs don't make it right." In other words, the first wrong that the "enterprising" manager experienced was to lose his job. And the second wrong was for him to go behind his boss' back & lower the loans of all his debtors. These two wrongs surely cannot make it right. Besides, I don't think that the Bible or Jesus would want to teach & encourage us to cheat & steal from the system even if it is an unjust & horrible one. So, what are we going to do with that unjust & horrible system? What do you suppose the spiritual lesson is for us in this Sunday's Gospel?

Before we answer those questions, let's try to examine that system & see what unjust & horrible things it has done. This Sunday's First Reading lets us have a glimpse of some evil things that the unjust & horrible system has done to the poor & the lowly as following, "Hear this, you who trample upon the needy & destroy the poor of the land! 'When will the new moon be over,' you ask, 'that we may sell our grain, & the Sabbath, that we may display the wheat? We will diminish the ephah, add to the shekel, & fix our scales for cheating! We will buy the lowly man for silver, & the poor for a pair of sandals; even the refuse of the wheat we will sell!'" My friends, aren't you outraged on hearing all those evil acts? Can you believe that the Lord would allow such an unjust & horrible system of governance to carry out its evil acts? Unfortunately, those unjust & evil acts continue to happen in our day & age as the rich & the powerful keep on oppressing & cheating the poor & the lowly. Big companies & their CEO's keep on accumulating more profits & outrageous compensation packages while their employees live paycheck to paycheck. Furthermore, our government has not lowered the tax rates for the working class, but has cut lots of social benefits to the poor & the lowly in our country & around the world.

If you are not outraged by those unjust & evil acts that big companies & our government have done to the poor & the lowly, let me draw attention to another one that our current government has carried out with the government of Israel in the Holy Land. The US government has continued to provide deadly bombs, destructive weapons, & political cover at the United Nations for the government of Israel to keep on killing & causing miseries in the Holy Land. How long will our current government continue to back up a foreign government with its policy for

indiscriminate killing & heatless starvation of innocent children? For the Catholics & Christians who support this current administration because they mistakenly thought that it is a pro-life government with its anti-abortion stand. I wonder how they could justify the rampant killing policy of this current administration & its allies. Furthermore, on every anniversary of the Holocaust, we have heard its dignitary attendees say that such a horrible act must not happen again in human history. If so, why would the world allow the same massacres happen in the Holy Land & Sudan? Shouldn't we speak out against those evil massacres & oppose all the governments supporting those horrible policies around the world?

Some of us might try to look the other way & let our current government carry on its horrible policies. This Sunday's First Reading tells us how God thinks about all the unjust & evil situations in the world as following, "...The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Never will I forget a thing they have done!" So, the Lord promises to hold all the governments & evil doers around the world accountable for their unjust & horrible acts. Meanwhile, in today's Second Reading, St. Paul asks us to do the following for people in leadership positions, "...I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, & thanksgiving be offered for everyone, especially for kings & those in authority, that we may be able to lead undisturbed & tranquil lives in perfect piety & dignity... It is my wish, then, that in every place people shall offer prayers with blameless hands held aloft, & be free from anger & dissension." So, St. Paul urges us to pray for everyone, especially our government & Church leaders to stop all the actions of anger & fighting. We must demand our current government to use its influence with its allies in Israel & Africa to stop the rampant killing in the Holy Land & Sudan.

Meanwhile, Jesus asks His followers to remember one more thing to live by in today's Gospel, "...Make friends for yourselves through your use of this world's goods, so that when they fail you, a lasting reception will be yours... If you cannot be trusted with elusive wealth, who will trust you with lasting?" So, Jesus asks us to be good stewards & make good use of God's blessings for us in this life to gain for ourselves an eternal life in God's Kingdom later on. He does not condemn our material possessions. But, if we do not know how to use them wisely, they could turn out to be a terrible source of temptations & a huge hurdle for us to come closer to the eternal life & God's Kingdom. That is why many saints decided to give away all their possessions & live a life of simplicity & poverty. That is why Jesus praised the manager in today's Gospel for being "enterprising" as he tried to use his current, temporary authority to lower the loans of all the debtors & prepare well for his future. That is what we are called to do with all the worldly possessions & authority entrusted to us in this life. Otherwise, the Lord will not entrust us with the eternal life or anything else in God's Kingdom.

My dear brothers & sisters, we live in a world that is unjust & evil because the rich & the powerful want to create the governing system that would further their evil desires & exploit the poor & the lowly. We must stand up against them & try to make good use of God's blessings for us in this life to gain for ourselves the eternal life in God's Kingdom in the future. Or, we could collude with those evil folks to build an unjust & violent world & receive the Lord's condemnation & harsh judgments on the Last Day. Those two choices are there for us to pick!