

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily  
July 26, 2020  
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Part of our formation in the Theological Seminary involves giving retreats and recollections to various groups whenever we can. We often begin these days of prayer with an invitation for the participants to come home to their deepest desires. "At this moment in your life, what is it that you are looking for?"

The idea is to lead the participants to realize their present values and priorities because these values and priorities tell them a lot of things about themselves. Also, an examination of desires hopefully brings a person to the Supreme Good. In the words of St. Augustine, "Our hearts are restless until it finds rest in God".

I think the readings for today bring to us a similar invitation to come home to our desires. In the first reading, Solomon, then a young King, was told by God to ask him for anything. Solomon didn't ask for a loving life, or for riches, or for victory over his enemies. Instead he begged for wisdom so that he would know how to govern his people with justice.

If you wake up one evening, and find God at the end of your bed telling you to ask for anything, would you know exactly how to respond?

For the parents among us here, perhaps the deepest desires would revolve around the welfare of their children, and rightly so. Parents work hard to earn enough so that there is food on the table, and there is something extra for the other necessities of family life. Yet in the course of everyday business, parents work so hard that they miss out on their deepest desires in the process.

I remember an author saying something like: In a period of 300 years, Israel had 42 Kings. Some of them are better known than the others – Saul, David, Solomon, etc. But out of 42, only 8 were considered good Kings. The rest, 34 of them, were bad Kings, leaders who were

spiritually bankrupt. And the heart of the problem was that fathers were too busy building their kingdoms that they had no time to build their sons.

If a parent isn't conscious enough about his/her deepest desires, he/she may end up ironically destroying the very things that he/she wants to build.

The Gospel for today tells us that at the bottom of all our desiring is no other than God himself. If we are sufficiently honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that our longings are ultimately transcendent in direction. All our longings for love, life, meaning, peace, or joy are never really satisfied completely by anyone or anything.

If we dig deep enough, we will find out that the pearl of great price lies beneath our peripheral desires and is found in God alone. Those who discover this truth know better and subordinate all the other things in life for the ultimate treasure.

In this mass, we pray for the grace of holy discovery. We ask God that as we examine the desires of our heart, we will find him at the core of our longings. We ask that we find for ourselves, finally, the pearl of great price.

Amen