

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, July 04, 2021
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle B

Upon reading the Gospel I couldn't help but recall the words that one of my neighbors once said to me, "You will never become a priest." As I pondered on those words, I don't know if she was envious of me or she was just too familiar with who I was.

As we reflect on our Gospel today, perhaps God wants to remind us about two important things:

First, that He can make use of the ordinary, that he can make use of the simple, as His instruments, in order to advance His will and desires. It does not require that a person has to be perfect so that God can make use of him/her for his divine purpose. In fact, God sometimes calls and makes use of the imperfect, of the weak, so that He could manifest the strength of God. God can use the weak in order to shame the proud.

This we can see in the apostles that Jesus chose. Matthew was a tax collector, a public sinner. Peter was an impulsive fisherman, quick with words but poor in performance. Paul was open about his imperfections. Simple, ordinary people, even sinners, but they were made instruments to fulfill God's designs. In the eyes of his townmates, Jesus was too ordinary to be that good, too simple in background to be used for God's work. We must therefore be careful about our assessments and judgements of people. Sometimes, we look down easily on those whom we know to be ordinary. It is amazing how our prejudices and biases can affect our judgments and decisions. Yes, we often judge people by their appearance, by their gender or race, and we get into trouble.

Second, that envy is always a useless proposition, one that is in fact harmful to us. While many of our other sinful habits can provide us some form or amount of satisfaction, no matter how fleeting, envy affords us with nothing but inner turmoil. It makes us blind to our own blessings and causes us to crave for what we see in others. At the end of the day, when the dust of covetousness shall have settled, an envious person is left without joy. He would hate the other for his triumphs, and he would detest himself for lagging behind.

Embedded within these lessons is what seems to me a quite challenging invitation – that we try to look at reality from the optic of God. If we are able to see others from God’s viewpoint, then we begin to see beauty and greatness in what appears to be ordinary. We also begin to rejoice in the giftedness which pervades the horizon of our experience, the giftedness which everyone shares including the self for the benefit of the whole. We pray that we grow in this respect so that familiarity ceases to be a threat to charity, so that it gets transformed instead into an opportunity for gratitude and joy in each of us.

Amen