

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily  
August 4, 2019  
18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

A priest was preaching dramatically one Sunday: Do not put your trust on riches! Do not focus your heart on money! You do not need money! In heaven there is no money! Then a young man stood up and said: "Father, we are already in heaven". The priest asked why, and the lad replied: "Because at home, there is always no money".

The priest is right in saying that in heaven, we do not need money. In the afterlife, no dollar or euro can guarantee happiness. But on earth, money is still necessary. Who doesn't want money here today? The reality is people need money. Part of our constant prayer when we go to church is for the Lord to give us money – enough money for our daily needs, for our children, for our future. And I'm quite certain that some of us here are asking God for some financial help. We are one in this –as your pastor I constantly need money for the parish and for our projects!

Money, therefore, is not bad in itself, not sinful in itself. In fact, honestly and industriously earned, it is a gift from God for ourselves, our families, and our communities. Bo Sanchez, a great Filipino lay preacher, who lived a long time in poverty, imitating St. Francis of Assisi, now explores a theology of wealth. He has come to realize that in order to help others; we must have some resources ourselves. Yes, you cannot give (especially to the poor) what you do not have.

But the Gospel issues a very appropriate warning regarding money or wealth or any other thing we consider valuable. Jesus cautions us against greed. Twice in our readings we hear the word greed mentioned. St. Paul tells the Colossians to put to death evil desires, including greed—which is called idolatry. Jesus, in the Gospel of Luke, warns: Take care to guard against all greed.

Why is greed wrong? Why is it idolatry? Greed is the desire to have more. It's a selfish desire for more money, more property, and more power. Greed is the feeling that what you have is not sufficient, not enough. A greedy person does not feel another person's need. He can only feel his own. Consciously or unconsciously, the greedy person worships his treasure, not God. And this will not bring him to eternal life. Jesus says: Though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions.

God sends us blessings, material or spiritual, so that we can use these to meet our needs. It is a sign of his love, his grace, his favor on our just labors. Let us remember though, that once we receive blessings, we become instruments of blessing to others. We must use our blessings for good purposes. We must use our blessings to share with those in need. That is part of our calling and mission.

All of us feel the temptation to be greedy. Let us ask the Lord for the grace to identify the many graces we receive each day and use them wisely for ourselves and for our neighbor's good. In this way we will be rich in what matters to God.