

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily
September 22, 2019
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

The Gospel parable challenges us to be smart in the pursuit of the Kingdom of God. Jesus uses the example of a shrewd manager in his master's business to teach us to be wise. There is a big difference between the wise and the shrewd/smart. Many godless people are smart—like the thieves, robbers, and terrorists. In the pursuit of their selfish goals and ambitions, however, they create destruction and unhappiness in the world. Shrewdness can be transformed into wisdom, as when the manager chooses to use his money and influence to gain more friends. Jesus praises the manager's astuteness, but not his dishonesty.

Many say, "Money is the root of evil". Instead, St. Paul says, "The love of money is the root of all evils". Greed is behind all evil designs. It can assume many forms: theft, robbery, hoarding of material things, using fraudulent schemes for personal gain.

Amos, the prophet of social justice (First Reading), castigates those who exploit the poor and make exorbitant profit, and who say, "We will buy the lowly for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals: even the refuse of the wheat we will sell! Their crime calls for God's immediate punishment.

On the other hand, Jesus proposes to his disciples and to all of us to be good and trustworthy stewards: to work for an honest living, to manage money wisely, to provide for the family, and to use money to help others. And, this is where the great challenge is, how to use our resources not only for ourselves, but also for the good of those in need.

I remember the daughter of my cousin. Her name is Angela. When she was about to celebrate her 8th birthday, her parents asked her "What gift do you want for your birthday celebration"? Birthday celebrations in the Philippines are quite important, because it is a time to celebrate with family, relatives and friends. So food and preparations are always part of it. So when the parents of Angela asked her what she wanted for her birthday, she said, "I want

money". The parents were surprised because this was the first time Angela asked for money for her birthday. "What do you do with the money"? Angela replied, "I want to buy some food for our poor neighbors". When they heard her reply, the mother couldn't help but cry. She was so happy that her little girl had the awareness in her heart about the responsibility of helping others. As we all know, true success is not measured by how much money we have earned or what degree we have achieved in life. It's all measured by the attitude that we have shown to others.

We are called to live simply, that others may simply live; to be content with what we have and habitually thank God for blessings received; to be generous and share as responsible citizens of one world. St. Teresa of Calcutta says, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other".