

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily
November 15, 2020
Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

I came across this short poem that I'd like to share with you:

There was a very cautious man
Who never laughed or played;
He never risked, he never tried,
He never sang or prayed.
And when he one day passed away
His insurance was denied;
For since he never really lived,
They claimed he never died!

There is a church in Brittany, France called Our Lady of the Risk. Why did the people there choose such a name for their church? Because they appreciated the enormous risk taken by the Virgin Mary when she agreed to be the mother of the Messiah. Mary lived in a society that, at worst, would stone an unmarried pregnant woman to death. Or, at best, would shun or ostracize her. Nevertheless, Mary was willing to risk it for the Lord.

Today's gospel reading deals with "taking risk". Jesus tells a parable about a man who was going on a journey. Before going on that journey, the man called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. What a risk! We know how the story goes...The one who received five talents took a risk by trading with them. The one who received two talents did the same. What did they risk? How much did they risk? Everything! The one who received one talent never took a risk—he dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money. And for that he was punished. Remember this: Condemnation is for anyone who, having even one talent, will not try to use it, and will not risk it for the common good.

One basic principle in the spiritual life is explicate hope: The Spirit grows in us precisely in the measure that we invested in self-giving love or in the measure that we give it away in

love. The life of God grows in us in the measure we give it away. We sinners, get caught in a bad rhythm. We try continually to fill ourselves up when, in fact, we should be emptying ourselves out in giving. Instead of having “open hands” we have “clasped hands”. The world makes us believe that our happiness relies on the things that we “keep” or store for ourselves: the huge amount of money we saved in the bank, and the many things that we can buy and the assets we accumulate. That is getting caught in a bad rhythm.

Again, today’s gospel reading illustrates a fundamental principle of our faith: Our being increases in the measure that we give it away. As someone puts it: “A bell is no bell till you ring it...A song is no song till you sing it...the love in your heart was not put there to stay; love is not love till you give it away”. Giving away gives more. We must realize that “giving away” is a source of grace – it is sharing in God’s way of being. Do you want to have the divine life? Well, then, give it away. Share God’s life, share God’s gifts. Do you want to be happy? Well, then, stop being concerned about your own happiness. Make someone happy. Happiness is found in loving acts, in selfless deeds, in giving of ourselves in love.

Remember this principle – and live by this: In the spiritual order, whatever is given away in the spirit of true love, always comes back to the giver – multiplied. Again, giving away gives us more. As the part of the famous prayer of St. Francis of Assisi puts it:

For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen