

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, June 23, 2024
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle B

A college graduating student came to me for counseling. She was greatly troubled by what she perceived as a lack of genuine concern from her parents. When I asked her why she thought and felt that way, she said, "It seems that all they care about is the academic honors that I must get".

"It seems that all that matters to them is that I graduate Summa Cum Laude. A lot of times they make me feel that they are not even concerned about my personal life, my love-life, my own hopes and dreams. They have not even asked me about my difficulties and struggles. In this respect, I feel that I do not really matter to them".

All of us, at one time or another, in one way or another, have felt this way in our relationships with the significant persons in our lives. We had our own experiences wherein we said to ourselves, "It seems that I don't matter to him (her)". We might have had valid reasons for thinking and feeling this way towards others. There might have been a basis for it. But can we say the same thing with the Lord? When we are troubled, when we are confronted with a series of problems, when we are in a crisis, when we are overwhelmed by challenges and trials, do we have a valid reason to tell the Lord: "Lord, do you not care about my troubles? Do I not matter to you?"

This is precisely the feeling the disciples are expressing in today's gospel reading. As the storm came the apostles are panicking and wake Jesus, saying, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" I wonder, how did Jesus feel with their question? It must have deeply hurt Jesus. After all the love that Jesus has shown them, the disciples doubt his love and concern for them. It is like your beloved child telling you to your face: "You do not really

care about me!" It is said, "Sometimes the Lord calms the storm; sometimes he lets the storm rage and calms his child." We may find ourselves in the midst of the storms, but as long as Jesus sails with us, we can find peace. St. Vincent de Paul reminds us, "The Lord often promises us a safe landing, but not a calm passage."

You and I are caught in the various storms of life. It may be the storm of hardships and struggles in your personal life, or of experiences of great betrayal, rejection, and woundedness, or of deep sadness, loneliness, and mental health problems. It may be the storm of being unemployed, your career or profession being put on hold, you suffering from a broken relationship. It may be the storm battering your family: lack of communication, quarrel, separation, divorce, having problems in making both ends meet, serious illness of a family member. In the midst of these storms, we may be tempted to say to the Lord what the disciples said in today's gospel reading: "Lord, do you not care that I am perishing?" "Do you not care that I am in great trouble?"

We might not have said that explicitly, but we have definitely doubted the Lord in other ways. The fact is, every time we get worried and anxious, we actually doubt God's care, concern and love for us.

What Jesus wants from us is the conviction that God takes care of his beloved children. What He wants from us is faith that is trusting. Indeed, worries and anxieties are all rooted in fear. Fear interrupts our view of Jesus, because it turns us away from him. That is why we have to recognize fear as a warning flag that indicates we need to slow down, quiet down, and sit down with Jesus for a good discussion on whatever it is that is bothering or troubling us. Jesus has got the answers, the encouragement, and the affirmation that we long for.

When you are tempted to think, when you are starting to feel that “the Lord does not care about you” or that “you do not matter to the Lord,” look at the manger of the Child Jesus and at the cross of the Crucified Christ.

You mattered to Jesus then. You matter to Jesus now. And you will always matter to Jesus.