

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, June 28, 2026
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A

It has been said, “The things we possess eventually possess us –unless we first surrender them to God.” And there is another equally profound insight: “You can hold God's gifts in your hands, but never let them take God's place in your heart.”

Many of us carry things in our hearts that we hold onto so tightly – relationships, possessions, ambitions, successes, fears, regrets, even our reputation. We become attached to them. We cling to them. And after a while, we no longer know how to let them go –so much so that the very things we possess begin to possess us.

That is why today’s gospel is both challenging and liberating. Jesus says “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me...” “Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me...” “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

At first hearing, these words sound harsh. Is Jesus telling us not to love our family? Of course not. The Lord Himself taught us to honor our father and mother. He loved His own mother deeply. What Jesus is saying is something much deeper: Nothing and no one should occupy the place in our hearts that belongs to God alone. The problem is not love. The problem is attachment. There is a difference between *loving* and *clinging*. Love sets free. Attachment

possesses. Love trusts. Attachment controls. Love receives everything as a gift. Attachment treats the gift as if it were God.

Many of our anxieties come from attachment. We become anxious because we are afraid of losing what we have. We become fearful because our security is tied to things that can disappear. We become restless because our identity depends on achievements, approval, success, or the opinions of others. But, Jesus invites us to a deeper freedom. The saints often spoke about “*holy detachment*.” It does not mean not caring or becoming indifferent. It means loving God first so that we can love everything else properly. When God is first, family becomes a gift rather than an idol. Success becomes a blessing rather than an obsession. Possessions become tools rather than masters. Even our sufferings become opportunities to trust rather than reasons to despair.

The detached heart is not an empty heart. It is a free heart. And freedom is precisely what Jesus wants for us. Notice the paradox at the center of today’s gospel: “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” The world says, “Hold on tightly.” Jesus says, “Entrust everything to me.” The world says, “Protect yourself at all costs.” Jesus says, “Give yourself in love.” The world says, “You are what you possess.” Jesus says, “You are a beloved child of God.” And here is the beautiful truth: The more tightly we cling to things, the more they control us. The more we surrender them to God, the freer we become.

Perhaps that is why some of the happiest people we know are not necessarily the richest, the healthiest, or the most successful. They are the people who have learned to place everything in God's hands. They know that everything they have is a gift. And because they know it is a gift, they can receive it gratefully, enjoy it lovingly, and surrender it peacefully.

In the end, Christian discipleship is not about losing. It is about finding: finding the freedom that comes from trusting God completely. Finding the peace that comes from putting Him first. Finding the joy that comes from loving His gifts without making them our gods.

Remember: Only when God occupies the center of our hearts do we discover the freedom, peace, and fullness of life for which we were created.