

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, September 27, 2026
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A

There is an old saying: “Your life may be the only Bible some people will ever read.”

We may know the right prayers, recite the Creed faithfully, and say “Amen” at Mass. But the real question is: Can people recognize the faith we profess in the way we actually live? Because one of the great dangers of the Christian life is allowing a distance to grow between our lips and our lives – between what we profess and what we practice.

And this is precisely the distance that Jesus exposes in today’s gospel parable. A father asks his two sons to work in his vineyard. The first son says, “I will not.” But later changes his mind and goes. The second son answers, “Yes, sir.” Respectful, polite, obedient –but he never goes. Then Jesus asks, “Which of the two did his father's will?”

Obviously, the first. Notice that Jesus does not ask which son spoke better. The second son wins that contest easily. Jesus asks which son did the father’s will.

There is an important warning here for every religious person. It is possible to become very good at the language of faith without actually living the life of faith. Faith becomes credible when what our lips profess is confirmed by the way our lives are lived.

The religious leaders to whom Jesus addressed this parable knew the right words. They knew the Scriptures, the commandments, the rituals and traditions. Their lips were saying Yes to God. Yet when John the Baptist came calling them to repentance, they would not change. By contrast, tax collectors and prostitutes had obviously lived lives that said No to God. Yet many of them listened, repented and changed direction.

Jesus' point is unsettling: It is possible to look close to God while our hearts remain far from Him. And that danger did not disappear with the Pharisees. It can happen to us. We can ask God for mercy while refusing mercy to someone who hurt us. We can say "Peace be with you" at Mass while carrying resentment in our hearts. Our lips can be close to God while our lives remain far from Him.

Perhaps the greatest danger is that we eventually become comfortable with the contradiction. Our lips say, "Jesus is Lord," but our ego remains lord. We pray, "Thy will be done," but secretly mean, "as long as Your will agrees with mine." We become Christians in name, without becoming Christians in the way we live.

But today's readings are not meant simply to make us feel guilty. They invite us to close the distance between our lips and our lives. And St. Paul shows us how: "Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus." In Jesus, there was no distance between what He proclaimed and how He lived.

He preached love – and He loved. He taught forgiveness – and He forgave. He called us to serve – and He became a servant. He spoke of self-giving love – and He gave Himself completely on the Cross. And that is the challenge of discipleship: to allow the Christ we profess with our lips to become visible in the life we actually live.

We all have gaps and inconsistencies. God does not ask us to pretend that the distance is not there. He asks us to let His grace close it.

So, when this Mass ends, let us not leave Jesus inside the church. Take Him into your home and workplace, into your relationships and responsibilities, into your conversations and decisions. Ultimately, the most convincing profession of faith is not simply the Creed we recite with our lips.

It is the Creed people can see in our lives.