

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily  
Sunday, October 25, 2026  
30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Cycle A

A monk was praying quietly in the monastery chapel. He was deeply absorbed in prayer when suddenly someone knocked on the door. It was a poor traveler, tired and hungry, asking for something to eat. The monk hesitated. He had not yet finished his prayers. He wanted to remain in the chapel and enjoy those precious moments of silence with God. But eventually, he stood up, opened the door, and welcomed the stranger. Later, someone asked him, “Were you not disappointed that your prayer was interrupted?” The monk smiled and answered, “I went to the chapel to meet Christ.” “But when someone knocked on the door, I discovered that Christ had come to meet me.”

Whether or not this story actually happened, it expresses a profound truth about Christian spirituality: Sometimes the person who interrupts our prayer becomes the very person through whom God invites us to live our prayer.

And this brings us to today’s gospel. A scholar of the Law approaches Jesus and asks, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus answers that we must love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. But He adds another commandment: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Why does Jesus insist on joining these two commandments? Because loving our neighbor is not a distraction from loving God. It is one of the essential ways our love for God becomes real. Love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable.

Our encounter with God must open our hearts to others. And our loving service to others can deepen our encounter with God.

Of course, this does not mean that prayer is unimportant or that every interruption must immediately be accommodated. Jesus Himself regularly withdrew from the crowds to pray. We need silence. We need contemplation. We need time alone with God. But prayer is not meant to become an escape from the people God has entrusted to our care. Prayer does not close our hearts to others. Authentic prayer teaches us to recognize when love is calling.

We are challenged to examine our religious practices. We may pray faithfully yet become impatient with our families, or attend Mass regularly yet ignore a neighbor in need. Without realizing it, we begin treating people as interruptions to our spiritual life.

The real challenge is not simply finding more time for God, but learning to recognize His presence in the people who need us. For the God we encounter in prayer is the same God who calls us to love our neighbor. Imagine how our relationships would change if we approached people not merely as demands upon our time, but as persons worthy of our love. Imagine how our own hearts would change if we learned to recognize that sometimes the holiest moments of our day are not the moments we planned. They are the moments when love unexpectedly asks something of us.

In a few moments, we will receive Jesus in the Eucharist. The Lord who gives Himself completely to us will send us to give something of ourselves to others.

Let us make one simple resolution: When someone genuinely needs my love, may I learn to see not merely an interruption, but an invitation.

Sometimes, while we are busy looking for God in the silence of prayer, He is already waiting for us in the person who needs our presence. And perhaps the prayer most pleasing to God is not always the one we manage to finish, but the one we allow to become an act of love.

Let us never become so absorbed in seeking God that we fail to recognize Him when love comes knocking at our door.