

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today's readings proclaim two truths about God and several truths about us.

Paul slips into his letter to Timothy the profound truth that God "*wills everyone to be saved.*" Although today most of us might assume this to be true, not all Christians believe this.

The second truth about God is Paul's affirmation in today's reading: "*For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all.*" Jesus is the one mediator between God and us both in his person and in his death. Because Jesus is one divine person, the Son of God, with two natures, human and divine, he is the new covenant, the new relationship, between God and humankind. His death on the cross sealed this new covenant.

On a human level, Paul asks that "*supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority...*" As we prepare for the election in November, we need to pray for all those who are currently in office and for all the candidates for office. We are living in a very complex, even dangerous world. Whether we agree with or disagree with those in elected office, we should pray that God will give them wisdom, love, and courage. Likewise, we should pray that the best candidates are elected in November, the candidates who will best promote the common good.

The prophet Amos is the prophet of justice. He railed against injustice. His challenge to us today is to our social conscience. As I mentioned last week, Pope John Paul II defined the sin of the world "as a kind of 'infection' which is spread from human hearts into the environments in which they live and into the structures which support and condition their existence."¹ Pope John Paul II's definition of the sin of the world would argue that injustice can be so embodied in the institutions and structures of society that we do not even recognize injustice when we see it. Amos challenges us to look critically at our own society. For example, all attacks against human life from conception to natural death are unjust acts. For another example, Cardinal Peter Turkson recently argued for a "social economy which invests in people by creating jobs, providing training and working for the common good."²

Today's Gospel speaks to us as individuals. In the parable, Jesus was not praising the dishonesty of the servant. Rather he was making the point that sometimes the not-so-good people are sharper than good people in dealing with others. Good people are often too trusting. This passage reminds us of Jesus' words: "*See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves*" [Mt. 10:16; NRSV]. Second, Jesus makes the point that we cannot serve both God and money. We are to love people and use money, but some people reverse it and use people and love money.

My brothers and sisters, in today's Gospel, Jesus' most practical advice to us was when he said, "*The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones.*" When children come to confession and confess lying, I often make the point that although the lie may seem very small or insignificant, every time we tell a lie, every time we are dishonest, we become a little less honest as a person. Authentic relationships can only be built upon honesty and trust.

¹Pope John Paul II, "The sin of man and the 'sin of the world': Catechesis by Pope John Paul II on Jesus Christ," General Audience, Wednesday, 5 November 1986, <http://totus2us.com/teaching/jpii-catechesis-on-jesus-christ/the-sin-of-man-and-the-sin-of-the-world/>, §7.

²Cardinal Peter Turkson, Opening address at an international conference entitled 'The Economy according to Pope Francis – a case study of social market economy,' Tuesday, September 12, 2016, Rome, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/09/13/conference_explores_popes_vision_of_a_social_market_economy/1257730.