

25th Sunday per Annum - C
Amos 8:4-7;
I Timothy 1:2-8;
Luke 16:1-13
Little Flower - 9/18/22

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today's second reading offers us two profound insights into God. The first offers us both hope and consolation: God "*wills everyone to be saved.*" However, this verse also challenges us. It is consoling to believe that God wants us to be saved. However, it is not always easy to believe that God wants everyone to be saved, even the worst people in the world.

The second is that Jesus is the one mediator between God and us. We believe this to be true for two reasons. Jesus is the one mediator between God and us because his divine nature and his human nature are united in the person of the Son of God. He, therefore, is the new covenant, the new relationship between God and us. Second, the new covenant was sealed by his sacrificial death on the cross when he offered himself to God for us by joining love for God and love for us perfectly in that one act.

At the same time, all three readings offer us insights into ourselves as well as practical advice.

Today's readings from the prophet Amos and from today's Gospel condemn injustice. In today's reading, Amos outlines some of the ways people cheat other people. However, he reminds them and us, "*The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Never will I forget a thing they have done!*" In other words, God does not forget injustice done to others.

We need to understand that Amos is the prophet of justice. Most of us are familiar with the beautiful passage from the Prophet Micah: "*What is good has been explained to you: this is what God asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.*" Scripture scholars tell us that in this verse Micah sums up the teaching of the three previous prophets: Amos—acting justly; Hosea—loving tenderly; and Isaiah—walking humbly with your God. Just a few weeks ago, the first reading from Isaiah encouraged us to walk humbly with our God. Therefore, if we want to answer God's call to goodness, we have to act justly, i.e., to treat others fairly and with respect.

The parable in today's Gospel offers a practical example of injustice. When the steward was going to be fired for squandering the rich man's money, he decided to win favor with the rich man's clients by cooking the books in their favor, to which they all seemed to agree. The steward was unjust, but so were all those who lowered their bills. Most of us find it easy to recognize injustice among individuals, but we have a harder time recognizing systemic injustice. For example, think back to the rampant racial segregation that existed in our country until the 1960's. We need to ask ourselves what are the systemic injustices of our times. This much is sure. Injustice is most often economically based. As Jesus noted in today's Gospel, we cannot serve God and money.

Something we all hate is being taken advantage of by others. However, as Christians, we probably should not be surprised if sometimes we are taken advantage of by others. As Jesus said in today's Gospel, "*For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.*"

My brothers and sisters, in the second reading, we are called to offer "*supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings ... for kings and for all in authority.*" Whatever our political persuasion, especially in these troubled times filled with division, we need to pray for President Biden and all civil officials. We need to pray that God will send his Holy Spirit upon them and give them the gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord and that they will allow themselves to be led by the Spirit of God. At the same time, with the election about seven weeks away, we need to pray that we will choose the right leaders going forward.