

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
X Sunday Ordinary Time-Cycle A
Ho 6, 3-6; Ps 50; Rm 4, 18-25; Mt 9, 9-13
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Let Us Live Without Exclusions

Jesus has the firm intention of extending His plan beyond any political, religious, or social exclusions. In this passage, Jesus discovers the most intimate needs of Matthew. A public sinner, excluded from Israel, his position as tax collector kept him subservient in all relationships. He managed money that was considered impure. It was money made at the cost of the poorest, and with the seal of the exploiters. Matthew collaborated with the foreign authority: he could establish the taxes arbitrarily and, in that sense, rob the people. In short, popular opinion considered tax collectors *abusive and cheating thieves*.

At the center, we find that Jesus does not exclude anyone from His friendship. In His new community, the messianic banquet, those excluded from Israel also participate. It is impressive that the past of the sinner is erased and that there are no other conditions for living in the Kingdom except sincere faith. That scripture from the prophet Hosea 6,6 that the Pharisees didn't put into practice or didn't know— "*I want mercy, not sacrifices*"—is the one that Jesus teaches: that love is above worship and observances.

For the rest, we understand that *the strongest* are the leaders and those *who endure evil* are the oppressed people. And in the same way, the *just* are those who are self-satisfied and the *sinner*s, those who desire and feel the need to be saved.

In addition to understanding from this Gospel that Jesus doesn't exclude anyone from His friendship, it fills us with hope; we find the teaching about how to live religion.

With His words, "*I want mercy, not sacrifices,*" Jesus leads us to living an essential, authentic religion in which a ritualistic practice without commitment is not sustainable. Our acts of worship have to be the consequence of the experience of love and fraternity that breaks the barriers of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion.

How do we break the chain of exclusions in our life and in our environment? How do we live without exclusions?

1. Let us return to God.

Let us return to take our place.

God is not impressed by our rites but by our living with mercy. Return to God, return to feed on His love. If you acknowledge Him, if you try again to understand God's reasons, you will stop maltreating your brothers, you will be more human, you will be like God.

If you search for God again, you will experience a breeze, a dawn, new life, joy, peace, and happiness and you will know why He prefers this to our exclusions.

2. Let us return to believing in God.

Like Abraham, we hope against all hopelessness. If you believe in God again, you will not return to doubting. You will know strength; you will be happy to give glory to God. Living like that, convinced that God does not exclude you, that He always fulfills His Word, what did He promise you? How do you want to live what He is already beginning to give you?

3.Let us live Mercy.

Stop judging and condemning; pause for a moment and look at the way Jesus looked at Matthew, the public Sinner. Can you feel the surge of emotion in that public sinner? Look at how, without even a suggestion, but only as an immediate reaction to the mercy of Jesus, Matthew began to turn, to believe that he could lift up his head; he would imagine reprogramming his life, now no longer serving the most powerful of the world, the oppressors, those who exclude, but those who most need to return to their place in the family and society.