

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
XXVI Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A
Ez 18, 25-28; Ps 25; Phil 2, 1-11; Mt 21, 28-32
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The Faithfulness of Our Relationships

To do the will of the Father who sends is the point of arrival of all that we do in life; to find this point of arrival could become a whole path of spirituality because it is not possible to reach this point if we are not faithful in our relationships with God and with others, those with whom we share our lives.

The short parable in the Gospel provokes this interior reflection in us: we ask ourselves if, in this moment of our story, we are being that father's second son whom he sends to work in the vineyard, who cheats his father, making believe that he will go, that he wants to comply with his father's request and to do his will, but in reality not even for a moment does it enter his mind to accede to such a request. Behind this apparent faithfulness hides a systematic infidelity. The relationship of this second son with his father could well be an inconsistent, evasive relationship...of unfaithfulness.

Or are we being the first son? He is forthright; he expresses his reluctance but in the end, he responds, perhaps because he realizes that the only way his life will make sense is if everything he does is linked to a common plan of family or to a will that has an ultimate value, superior to his own will.

The tension of the sending is the same for the first son as for the second: to do the will of the father.

What joy in our hearts to reflect on this Word of Jesus that leads us this week to question our faithfulness, to accept that we are vulnerable when we stop examining ourselves! What security and tranquility result if I am able to recognize that what I do has a transcendental meaning in God's plan!

How important it is to discover, as did St Augustine in the fourth century, that one cannot be faithful to God and unfaithful to man. To discover that all our relationships are held together by this truth: *faithful to God is in faithfulness to my brothers and sisters.*

How important it is to examine the faithfulness of our relationships, especially now when the world lives with so many superficial relationships, relationships based on advantage or pretense that obscure the communication of the will of God!

But how do we measure the faithfulness of our relationships in the family; in a group of friends that is part of our life and our faith life; and in the relationships with those with whom we exchange services?

Let us look at three ideas:

1-Let us reconsider.

In Ezekiel, God confirms to us that He is not unjust and that condemnation or salvation depends on the actions of each one of us: he who reconsiders and turns from the wickedness he has committed preserves his life.

We could reconsider as does the first son in the Gospel or as do the publicans and prostitutes who allow themselves to question whether or not they are doing what is right; or we could become like the high priests and elders of

the people who were adamant, taking for granted that what they did was what God wanted.

It would be interesting to reconsider, to question again my best actions, my best relationships, examining them to see if, through them, I am achieving what God wants, what the Father who sent me has foreseen so that I will be saved.

2- Let us accomplish the will of God.

It seems that the will of God does not always coincide with mine; besides, in the language of Paul, the will of God is found in the will of my brother, in the interests of the other and not in mine. This is almost incomprehensible, especially when Paul tells us to regard the other person as superior to ourselves. Have you regarded another as superior to yourself? Have you looked out for the interests of others before your own interests? We respond yes very easily when that other is my loved one, the person whom I love; but it is almost impossible when I have to do that with others; nevertheless, it is to that extent that I must look for the will of Him who sent me. Because the persons whom I happen to meet in my life have not come into it by chance; they are there so that I may follow a path of perfection. It would be magnificent to discover in them a will that surpasses mine!

Paul's ideal is reached when we share the experience of mutual love. The consistency of my relationships with God and with others has this absolute value similar to that of Christ, to strip me of my rank, to allow communication of the truth, justice, and peace that God wants to communicate to me through others.

What great strength when someone maintains faithful relationships; he will never be unprotected!

3-Let us overcome simulation.

Behind simulation hides a systematic infidelity.

It can happen that we are so accustomed to living our own will that we confuse it with will of God the Father who sends it. And really, we are submitting others to our egoistic will, being unfaithful to God, to others, and even to ourselves. How terrible it is to be in such an error without realizing it! What has happened?

Faithfulness in our relationships holds us responsible for overcoming our simulation with everyone. At times, what is missing is an honest word that comes from the heart, a word of love to help my family member, my friend, or someone I work with, to end pretense.

At times, it is simple to discover simulation in our family. We know that someone is in error, but we don't say anything because we don't want to cause hurt or discomfort. Nevertheless, it is essential that we expose it so that the transparency of faithfulness in our relationships emerges. In the same way, we also look for a will that is higher than ours, the will that has a beautiful plan for everyone.