**“Honest and Dishonest Wealth”**

All our readings point us to, the words ‘honesty and dishonesty. When we are honest, our relationship with others will be fulfilling and whatever we do, will be pleasing to God. When we are honest, we would treat others in accordance to God’s commands and He will trust us with anything we need. But when we are dishonest, our neighbor will not trust us and above all, we will be separating ourselves from the love of God.

Honesty means to belief that someone is trustworthy and they would not ‘pull a wool over your eyes’ or cheat us. It means we will always believe whatever they tell us as the truth. While dishonesty means the opposite. Dishonesty means, we would always take whatever a dishonest person tells us, ‘with a grain of salt’ even if what they tell us might be true. When we deal with a dishonest person, there will always be doubt in our minds and we would always want to verify the authenticity or veracity of what they tell us.

In our first reading, God through prophet Amos warned those who are dishonest in dealing with the poor. He said they are heading for eternal destruction. He noticed a big gap during his time, between those who have and those who did not have. He noticed that those who have, were getting their wealth by dealing dishonestly with the poor. They were breaking God’s commandment in Leviticus 19:35 by manipulating their equipment. He appealed to them to be honest in dealing with the poor.

We also have similar problems in our current world. We notice that the gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider and wider. It is almost impossible for the poor to pull themselves out of poverty because of low wages. When we look closely, we would notice that jobs such as house cleaning, does not pay well for those who do them to have a living wage. While jobs like a CEO of a large cooperation that are valued by society, are excessively compensated. While it is not a condemnation of wealth, it is a condemnation of how wealth is dishonestly distributed.

Paul in our second reading, tells us that through prayers, supplications, and petitions, we can appeal to God for His mercy for everyone. It is only through appealing to God’s mercy that we will have peace in the world. It is through honesty, which is pleasing to God that we can be saved from turmoil and disorder in this world. Paul tells us that our honest prayers, supplications, and petitions to God needs to go through Jesus Christ who is our only mediator.

Jesus in our Gospel reading also used a parable to point us to honesty and dishonesty. Through the parable, Jesus painted a picture of a dishonest steward who was reported to his master for misappropriating his master’s property. Jesus used the parable to show us how people of this world deal with each other prudently.

The way Jesus used the parable might remind us of a movie we might have seen in the past, Ocean 12 staring George Clooney, Brad Pitt, and Matt Damon as major actors. While watching the movie, you might be fascinated by how well they planned to steal ‘the egg’ and deep down you might wish they would not get caught, though you knew you were wrong in hoping so.

The movie is similar to how Jesus presented His parable. We are certain that Jesus would never approve of the sinful act by the steward nor would He wish that we imitate his sinful behavior. Jesus is only interested in showing us how easy it is for us to do the same thing as the dishonest steward thinking it is alright to do so. It was love of money and easy life that made the steward act dishonestly. Honesty leads us to God, while dishonesty leads us to worldliness and love of money.

According to Jesus, the point of the parable is that the actions of the dishonest steward is only good for this world. It would not get him into heaven. Jesus wants us to use similar ingenuity to do good that would get us into heaven thereby, doing the will of God. In other words, He wants us to **“be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves”** (Matt 10:16b).

As we come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us ask Him for more grace to be honest in everything we do.