

4h Sunday in Lent - March 30, 2025  
Homily by Bp. Romie- Jun Peñalosa

I want to stay here so I can see your beautiful faces when I would share something from my heart I would like to be up close and personal because I'm going to share with you something that is very very founded in my heart gusto kung nakikita ko kayo habang kausap ko kayo. Before we go to the gospel let us look at the Old Testament reading today. The Old Testament reading reminds us that God is always in the pursuit of his people because he wants to have a relationship with them. Amen. Ang Diyos ay hindi isang Diyos na tumatanggi. Ang Diyos mismo ang naghahanap ng paraan na magkaroon tayo ng relasyon sa kanya. And we see that in the Old Testament. You know before they they came out of Egypt they were circumcised, yung mga Israelites, they were circumcised. Meaning to say circumcision is the act, okay, whereby they have covenant with God. Now the relationship with God and Israel is not just emotion, hindi yan parang feeling

lang, you know. It's really a covenant. Pareho ng relasyon ng mag-asawa. Pag sinabi mo mag-asawa, pumunta talaga yan sa harap ng Diyos and they made a covenant with God that they will love each other for all their life. Ganun din ang Diyos with Israel. So they had a covenant with God but the thing is

when they went out of Egypt, those who were circumcised, the men who are supposed to be in covenant with God, did not obey God. So what happened was in the desert, they all died. Yung promise ni Lord na papasok sila sa promise na it was not fulfilled in them because they refused to obey God. Pumapalpak ang buhay natin when we do not obey God. Don't forget that. Kahit gaano kasarap, kahit gaano kaganda sa palagay mo, if you're not obeying God, in the end, it will lead to destruction. So they all died. Pero papano yung mga anak nila? How are the children? The children, God said, okay, I will still let you enter the promised land but first I have to circumcise you. Why? Why? To remove the reproach from you. Tatanggalin ko yung

reproach sa inyo. Bakit? Kasi yung mga tatay ng mga batang ito, eto yung mga tatay na hindi sumunod sa Diyos. And the sin of the father will always bring reproach to the children. Okay? Kaya pag yung tatay magnanakaw, anong sasabihin ng mga tao sa mga anak, ay, yung anak nagmagnanakaw yan. Siguro magnanakaw din yan. So, wala pang ginagawa yung bata, wala pang ginagawa yung bata, meron na kaagad siyang reproach sa buhay niya. Nakakahiya na kaagad. And God doesn't want that with His children and so sabi niya, these are the children of the men who disobeyed me but I will remove the reproach from them. I'm going to have a covenant with these children. And so they were circumcised again. You see, the heart of God, you know, God is not just wanting to

forgive us of our sins. God wants to renew our life. And we also see that in the New Testament reading, the second reading we have, that if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. You know, God is not just concerned about your sin to forgive your sin. God wants to renew your life. Amen? Hindi lang gusto ng Diyos na magbago ang buhay mo, gumanda ang buhay mo. God wants you to be like Him

in life so we can share with the life of God. That's the purpose, that's the reason

why God would remove sin from us because if there is sin in our life, we cannot partake of the divine nature of God. Hindi lang gusto ng Diyos. He doesn't just

want to make your life beautiful. God doesn't just want your life to be good. He wants your life to be part of His life and He wants you to partake of His life also. He wants to be one with us and to be one with us, we have to share in the life of God. Now, we go to the gospel today. Hindi ko na ikikwento yung gospel because this is one story in the gospel that every time kinikwento ko to, hindi ko talaga napipigilan, tumutulo talaga yung luha ko. One time, I attended a

retreat and in that retreat, we were asked by the retreat master, sabi niya, babasahin ko yung story ng prodigal son. How many of you have read the story of the prodigal son? Alam niyo na yung kwento ng prodigal son? Alam niyo na ba?

Okay, wag ko na ikwento ulit ha. Hahaba tayo. Tatapusin ko lang ng maaga to. So, hindi ko na ikikwento. So, in that retreat, ang sabi ng retreat master namin, sabi niya, okay, I would like you to identify yourself with one of the characters. Sino ba yung mga characters sa kwento ng prodigal son? Number one, yung prodigal son, yung umalis at lumayas sa presensya ng tatay niya. Tapos, nandun yung tatay. Yung tatay na mabait. Yung tatay na mapagmahal. And you have the elder brother. The elder brother who is so arrogant, self-righteous. Okay, tatlo

yan. So, sabi niya, pumili ka. You choose and identify yourself with the characters. It was so easy for me to identify with the younger son. Madali lang sa akin. When I read the story, I identified with the younger son because it's all of us. Ganyan tayong lahat. The younger son represents our young nature, yung kabataan natin. We were so sure of ourselves. We want to do things our way. Hindi ko kailangan ng tao. I can do it on my own. I don't need anybody else.

When

we were young, we were adventurous. We were taking risks. And we were also stupid. And one time or another, we took our resources.

We naldas natin. And you know, the younger son represents many of us. When we do that, we fall on our faces. Bagsak talaga tayo. Amen? And bumagsak din ako sa buhay ko. There was a time. So, I identify with the younger son. But I can also identify with the elder son. Sino tong elder son? The elder son is one who is unforgiving. Ayaw magpatawad. Hindi nga siya umalis sa presensya ng tatay niya but he is so, so arrogant, mayabang, entitled. He is a smug. He's arrogant. He's unforgiving at ito pang kasalanan ng elder son. He is completely unaware of how good his father is. Nandyan siya nakatira sa bahay ng tatay niya pero wala siyang alam kung gaano kabait ang tatay niya. Hindi niya alam. Have we been guilty of that also? Many times in my life. So, I am

I am the younger son and I am the older son at the same time. We are sinners.

But

the story of the gospel today is not about the two sons. This is the story of a father. A father who is so loving. The point of the story of the prodigal son is to remind us today, to point to us, kung anuman ang iniisip niyo sa Diyos, tandaan niyo lang. Ang Diyos natin ay talagang lubos na mapagmahal. When we

sin and we make mistakes, sometimes we have a notion that God is someone who is angry at you. You know, the problem with that, pag meron tayong nagawang kasalanan, ang iniisip kaagad natin, galit ang Diyos sa akin. Galit si Lord sa akin.

We think of that. Why do we think of that? Because we think that God only loves us because of the things we do. Akalain mo, merong kang tatay na minamahal ka lang dahil sa mga ginagawa mo. Kaya kung mabuting ginagawa mo, love na love ka ng Diyos. Pero pag malina yung ginagawa mo, God will not love you anymore because you are doing the bad things and the wrong things. No, that is not the God I know. In our gospel today, Jesus would like to remind us of who God is. God does not love you because of what you do. I don't want a father like that. I don't need a father like that. What I need is a father who would love me because of who I am, not because of anything I do. I want a papa, a tatay, who can love me because of who I am. Who am I? Sino ka ba? Sino ako? We are sons and daughters of God. Anak niya tayo. At itong pinapakita ng ni Cristo sa atin ngayon, na yung Diyos natin is the kind of God who loves you not because of what you can do for Him, not because of the things you do. This God is a God who loves you for who you are. Who are you in the eyes of God? You are His precious child. Kagaya ng baby na iyan, nahawak-hawak ng tatay at nanay, dinadala sa simbahan. Wala pang ginagawa yung bata na iyan, mahal na siya ng tatay at nanay niya. Makikita niyo naman. Diba? Oh. Hinahawa ka ng tatay, ginaganyan-ganyan para huwag maingay daw. Okay? Hindi ako na iiritas sa bata na umiiyak sa loob ng simbahan. Okay lang sa akin. So don't worry. That child has not done anything yet. Wala pang ginagawa yung bata na iyan, pero hawak siya ng tatay at nanay niya, mahal na siya ng nanay at tatay niya. It's the same thing with God. That's why

this prodigal son, itong batang lumayas, kinuha niya yung mana niya. Alam niyo

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kung kailan niyo makukuha yung mana niyo sa magulang niyo? Ha? In Israel? You only get your inheritance when your parents die. Pag namatay yung magulang mo, pwede mo na kunin yung mana mo. So yung itong batang na to, bastos talaga. Yung kinuha niya

yung mana niya, ibig sabihin yan, parang sinasabi niya na sa magulang niya, mamatay ka na sana. Kasi kinuha niya na maaga yung ana niya. That's the message. I hope you die early. I want to get my inheritance. Pero tingnan mo yung tatay. Pinagkait ba ng tatay? Sinabi ba ng tatay na hindi ko ibibigay sa ito? Alam ba ng tatay na wawaldas ang bata yung mana niya? Alam ba ng tatay? Sino sa inyo nagsasabi, oo, alam ng tatay? Sino sasabi sa inyo, alam ng tatay? Kung nandun ako, sasabihin ko sa tatay, huwag, huwag, naku. You're so stupid if you do that. But this father is not an ordinary father. He's really a loving father. Binigay pa rin niya yung mana.

Mayroon sa inyo nagagalit? Bakit binigay ng tatay? Tayo, diba minsan?

Pag hiningi ng bata, huwag. Pa, ako lang ro'n. Huwag, hindi. Pa, ako lang ro'n. Hindi,

hindi. Paulit-ulit, paulit-ulit. Finally, o sige, sa'yo na. Diba, ganyan naman tayong? Sa itong batang to, kulit ng kulit sa tatay niya, finally, binigay yung

mana sa kanya. At true enough, winaldas ng, winaldas ng bata. Alam niyo ba itong kwento na to? This is a common story in Israel. Kinikwento ito ng mga tao sa Israel, panahon pa ng Old Testament. That's why, manunotis niyo, it's a common theme. There are two brothers, no? Common yan sa Bible. May dalawang magkapatid. Sino? Si Jacob at si Iso. Yung isa bad, yung isa good. It's a common story. Kinikwento yan ng mga magulang sa mga anak nila. Bakit kinikwento itong kwento ng dalawang magkapatid so that ang mga bata matakot at huwag nang mag-disobey sa parents? Okay? Naalala ko yung kinikwento sa amin ng nanay namin nung maliit kami yung the boy who cried wolf. Alam niyo na yan? The boy who cried wolf?

Anong

minsahin ng kwento na yan? Huwag mag-sinungaling. Diba? Yan ang minsahin yan. Alam natin yung kwento na yan. Kaya in the end, yung bata, sa sobrang sinungaling, paraging nagsisunangaling, kinain ng wolf. The story of the two sons

is a common story in Israel. The message is never disobey your father. Kasi itong

kwento nito sa Old Testament. And the Jewish people, this is what the story is about. There are two sons. One was good. The other was bad. He disobeyed. In the

end, sumubsob siya, sumablay ang buhay, nasira ang buhay, bumalik sa tatay niya. Pagbalik niya sa tatay niya, yung tatay niya hindi lumabas ng bahay. Humihingi yung bata ng tawad. Lumuluhod sa labas. Humihingi ng tawad. Yung tatay hindi talaga lalabas. At hindi magpapatawad ang tatay. And the moral of the story, kaya

huwag niyong suwain yung tatay niyo. Kasi susubsob ang buhay niyo at hindi na kayo papatawarin. Yan ang kwento na yan. Pero si Jesus, nung kinuha niya yung kwento na yan, ginamit niya rin yung kwento na yan.

Jesus used the story. But there was a twist at the end of the story. Iniba ni Jesus yung ending. Because the ending was, when the son returned to the father, when he realized his own mistake, when he returned to the father, you know what? Malayo pa yung bata, tumakbo na yung tatay. That cannot be done by Jewish people. They will never do that for their children. But Jesus was telling them, not your father in heaven. Your father in heaven is not like that. Yes, we have to obey God. We have to follow God. We have to follow His commandments. But even if we fail many times, you are not so far from God that He could not reach you and embrace you again. Yan ang minsahin niya. In the season of Lent, I pray that all

of us would realize this. Would come to terms with ourself. Would come to realize our sinfulness, realize our arrogance sometimes that we take God for granted in our life. Like the elder son who is not aware of the goodness of his father, nandito sa simbahan palagi, pero akala niya slave lang siya sa simbahan. The elder son, he was with the father all the time, but etong sabi niya

sa tatay, I have been a slave to you. Ganyan bang tingin natin sa Diyos? Hindi tayo umalis sa simbahan, nandito tayo. But we feel so entitled to be here. We don't like other people who comes here na hindi natin gusto. You know, pakasalan yan, palabasin nyo yan.

Never forget your father loves you very much. And this is the message of the gospel today. In the season of Lent, I would like us to reflect and meditate in our life on the goodness of our God.

Merong kanta akong kinakanta etong Lenten season. You know, it's funny because it's not even a, I don't know if it's a Christian song, but it's an old song. Etong kinakanta ko.

And this is basically I use this song as my prayer.

It's a song way back in the sixties. Alam to ni brother Rex kung anong kanta ito. Sa mga bata, hindi nyo pa narinig itong kanta na ito. Nasa ere pa kayo lumulutang-lutang nung kinakanta ito. Now remember this song sa mga oldies, alam nyo itong kanta na ito.

I ask you if there comes a time  
that you grow tired of me.

Never my love, never my love.

You know, that's a beautiful song. But the question is, Lord,  
may time ba noon na napagod ka rin sa akin?

Takbo ako ng takbo, palayo ako ng palayo sa iyo.

Ini-snub kita, hindi kita kinakausap. Was there a time, Lord, that you grow  
tired of me? And this is what God said for me inside my heart.

Based on our gospel today, this is his response. Never my love.

Niminsan hindi ako napagod sa pagmamahal sa iyo.

Kahit napasaway ka, minahal kita ng lubos at mahal na mahal kita sa lahat ng  
oras, magpakailanman. Amen?

Remember, you are blessed, but don't just be blessed.

Be a blessing.