

3rd Sunday of Easter - May 4, 2025
Homily by Bp. Romie- Jun Peñalosa

In our gospel today, we see Peter said that I am going back to fishing because sometimes when we experience failure in our life, we just go back to the things that we are comfortable with.

One time, the trials in my life got so intense, it became very difficult for me. I have to take care of my family, I have to take care of the church, and the finances was very low.

Mababa talaga yung finances. And there was a point in my life that I could not feed my children anymore. Para sa isang tatay, para sa isang lalaki, that is so painful to see your children, lalo na yung mga batang hindi nagri-reklamo. They know my work, they know my ministry, and they respect me so much. They respect my vocation as a priest, walang nagri-reklamo. And so whatever I put on the table, I have taught my children to thank the Lord at wag maghanap ng ibang pagkain.

But for me as a father, it was so painful. I know, I know na naghanap din silang masasarap na pagkain. There was a time that I would go to the neighbors, mamimitas ako ng balunggay, punta na naman ako sa isang kapitbahay namin. Hindi na actually kapitbahay dahil malayo. Kukuha ako ng papaya. Okay. Nandun lahat ng ingredient ng tinola maliban lang sa manok. Nandun yung papaya, nandun yung balunggay, nandun yung luya, nandun yung tanglad.

Kasi napupulot mo lang yan kung saan. Pero yung manok, maliban lang kung nakawin mo, kailangan mong bilhin. And I came to that point, dumating ako dun sa punto na yan. Kung saan tayo mahina, dun tayo sinusubukan ng Diyos minsan.

Why would God do that? I believe for one purpose and that is to strengthen you in that area. God saw my weakness. God saw that in my heart, I wanted to provide for my family and I will do anything to provide for them.

But that is a weakness because sometimes you cannot do that. You have to rely on God. You have to prioritize your commitment to God.

So, after a few months of like that, someone called me up. There was a man who owned a solar company in Canada who came to the Philippines and he was looking for a man who would manage that business for him.

And so I saw it as an opportunity because my experience in sales, I was a salesman before I became a clergyman, at least man.

And I went to him, I talked to the CEO, nag-usap kami and he was so interested and he invited me to work. At tinanong niya sa akin, magkanong sahod gusto mo? And I said to him, I want this amount. Sinukat ko yung budget para sa pamilya, yun lang. Ang sabi niya sa akin, that's too low, I can give you more.

So sabi ko sa kanya, tingnan mo muna yung trabaho ko. You look at my work, how I work. If you like it, dagdagan mo. Pag hindi mo nagustuhan, then you fire me out.

Well anyway, I worked. And the money started to come in. Pumasok na yung pera. And I go to Iloilo because the office is there. It is in SM, so I would go to SM.

But during the weekends, I go back again to work. But before I accepted the work, I went to our bishop. At that time, siya yung bishop, siya yung boss ko. I asked him, bishop, is it okay for me to work again? Just to augment, makadagdag lang sa budget. And the bishop, hindi niya sinabing yes or no. This is what he said to me, you decide. It's your call.

Hindi niya sinabi, sige, sige, magtrabaho ka para matulungan mo lang yung pamilya mo. He said, you decide. It's your call. So I decided. Based on what he said, I decided to work.

And I did work for a couple of months and money starts to come in. Pumasok na yung pera and because I got in contact with other businessmen again, business opportunities came. Bumalik talaga ako sa dating buhay ko.

Where money starts coming in and you're confident in talking to people. But something was happening inside me, my zeal, my love for ministry and work suddenly begins to wane off.

True enough, naalala ko yung sinabi ni Jesus, you cannot serve two masters at the same time. You have to choose one. It's not sin if you work and serve God at the same time. It's not sin.

But for me, it became a snare. It became a trap for me. Because now I'm being lured back to a life which I had before with a big box, may pera na naman, with

connections, with people, you know, in the big city, sa malaking siyudad. Natapon kasi ako dun sa barrio. Ngayon, nandito na naman ako sa siyudad magtatrabaho. And I was so excited. And so finally, I decided, sabi ko, I will not anymore continue. Sayang yung pera.

Sayang yung income na malaki. But then I said, Lord, I gave that life up many years ago and I chose you. Now you provide for me. I taught my children, tinuraan ko yung mga anak, that you only get what God gives you and you thank God for it. Pero ako, I wanted more.

So sabi ko, dapat yung leksyon na yan sa akin yan. So I went home, I resigned from the work and I went home. And we went back to that life again. But this time, I was peaceful inside me.

And there now, hindsight, looking back to that time, binabalik-balikan ko yan once in a while in my mind, I realized that paggipit na tayo, pagnalagay tayo sa alanganin, we tend to go back to the familiar life we know. Bumabalik talaga tayo doon.

And I am not immune to that tendency. I also had that problem. But hindsight, looking back now, I realized it should not be. Our gospel today is the same. Peter, who was called by Jesus, sabi ni Jesus sa kanya, I'll make you a fisher of men, and he started out in his ministry, working in the ministry, serving Jesus, dami niyang ginagawa.

But then, a problem came up. When Jesus was arrested, he got scared, natakot siya, nung hinuli na si Jesus.

And the problem with Peter is because he made a commitment, he made a vow, just like me, I made a vow to God. When I became a priest, I made a vow to God that from that day that I lay before God, I said to God, I will follow you wherever you would go, even if it becomes difficult for me, susunod ako sayo.

I made that vow. But when I started to experience the difficulty of life, I began to see the reality of life. Life is not a bed of roses. Life has thorns and difficulties and trials. Namulat yung mata ko doon.

And I failed. Well, not totally failed, but experienced the failures in that part. And I read the gospel today, and I'm a bit emotional because ito nangyari kay Peter, happened to me. And so relate na relate, diba?

Peter, the man that Jesus called the Rock, ang tawag ni Jesus sa kanya, pinalitan yung pangalan niya from Simon, Jesus called him Rock. He is strong. He is going to be the foundation of the church.

Ganyan ang tiwalan ng Diyos sa kanya. And Peter made a vow. Sabi niya, Lord, I will never leave you. Even if I have to die, I will die for you.

Sounds familiar, diba? We make promises to Jesus. Peter made a promise. I will not leave you for anything else. I will die. I will follow you even if I will die.

And Jesus, knowing Peter very well, predicted, sabi ni Jesus sa kanya, you know what, before the rooster crows three times today, or before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.

And Peter said, no, hindi ko talaga gagawin yan. He was so sure of himself.

Ganon din ako. When I decided to give my life to Christ, decided to lay down my life to become a priest, I was so sure of myself that I will never, never go back to an old life that I have left behind to follow Christ.

And so, Peter made a vow. I will not leave you. I will never, never leave you. I will die, in fact, for you if I need to die for you.

Then on that night where Jesus was taken to the courtyard of the high priest, there was a mob of people, binubugbog si Jesus, kinuyog siya ng taong bayan.

Alam mo, delikado talaga yan pag kinuyog ka ng taong bayan. Wala nang polis, wala nang titigil dyan. Pag binugbog ka dyan, mabubugbog ka na lang talaga.

No one can stop a mob when they start hurting you. And that's what happened to Jesus. That's what the Pharisees did. They took a mob because they know Jesus will not be, hindi siya pwedeng matalo sa isang trial. Alam nila, innocent siya.

And so they just took the mob and tried to hurt Jesus. Binubugbog nila si Jesus. And Peter followed Jesus. He was there. He was so afraid. Ito na yung pagkakataon mo to prove your love for Him.

This is now your chance. This is now everything that you said, I will follow you even if I will die. It's now that opportunity, that moment. But Peter, when he came to that moment, he becomes unsure of himself. Hindi na siya sigurado.

And this is what happens to us many times. Husband and wife, they started out, you get married, siguradong sigurado yung babae sa lalaki, yung lalaki sigurado

sa babae. Then one day the marriage will be tested. Masusubukan yung pag-aasawan nila and the guy says, I don't think I love my wife anymore. And the wife will also said, I have fallen out of love. I am not in love with my husband anymore. And so the marriage becomes shaky. And some people, some couples will decide to leave each other. Iiwanan na lang nila yung asawa nila. Iiwanan niyo yung husband niya because they are not sure of themselves anymore. And it's a tragedy when that happens because when a marriage breaks up, it's always the innocent who suffers. Guess who suffers when you leave your wife and when the wife leaves the husband? Who suffers? Huh? It's always the children who suffers. Wala naman kasalanan yung mga bata. But they are the ones who will reap the pain. Kaya sa mga tatay, mga nanay, bago niyo isipin yan, isipin niyo muna yung mga bata. Think of your children first. When my stepmom and my dad, they were fighting all the time. Nung nag-aadjust yung father ko, my father got remarried again. And yung second wife ng father namin had a daughter sa second marriage niya who we love very much. So nung nag-aaway sila ng second wife niya, one morning, the daughter just went up to my dad and sabi niya, Dad, never leave mama behind. Huwag mo talagang iwan si mama ha. Natakot yung bata. And this is what my father said to my sister, sabi niya, for you, no matter what happens, I will never do that to your mama. For you. And nakita ko taga yung kapatid ko, she was so happy that my father made that commitment. It's the same thing with Peter, he made a commitment to be with Jesus, to really stick it out with Jesus, to never leave Jesus, even if circumstances would change. But on that fateful night when Christ was arrested, Peter suddenly become unsure of himself. He becomes unsure of his commitment to Jesus. Will I go through this? Talaga bang gagawin ko ito? And when someone asked him from the crowd, sabi sa kanya, hey, kasama mo yan, di ba? And that's where Peter blew it. Sabi niya, ha? I swear to God, I don't know the man. Tinawag mo pang Diyos. You even called on God to be your witness. I do not know this man. Wow. Super. Denial talaga yung ginawa ni Peter. And the second time someone approached him, sabi niya, oh, you're a Galilean. Yung tono ng panalalita niya, no? Parang malalaman ko kaagad kung taga-balete ka o taga-ibahay ka sa tono ng salita mo. And Peter, from Galilee, cannot deny Jesus is also from that area. So sabi, you're a Galilean, magkasama kayo niyan. And the mob, the crowd are now pressing on him. And sabi niya, no, no. I swear to God, I don't know him. Twice. Then finally, a girl approached him. Babae. And the girl said, yes, I saw you. You are with that man. And Peter said, no, no, I never knew him. Hindi ko talaga nakilala yung tao na yan. Then at that moment, the rooster crowed and Peter remembered what Jesus said to him. And Peter, like Judas, he cried. When he realized his blunder, his mistake, a mistake that you cannot correct again, hindi mo na maayos. He just cried and cried and cried unconsolably. He just cried. And this is the Peter that we see in the Gospel today. Imagine mo. He failed in fulfilling his commitment, his vow to Jesus. He failed in his love for Jesus. So ano nangyari sa kanya? So he was on the boat. Sabi niya, I'm going back fishing. I'm going back to the old life I know. I'm going to the life that I am comfortable with. Okay? May mga taong ganyan. Suplada. Tapos nakilala si Lord, bumait. Nung nagkagulo ang buhay, bumalik sa pagkasuplada na naman. Ayan ka na naman. May mga taong sinungaling. Nung nakilala si Jesus, they started standing and speaking the truth. But when they have failed one time or another in their life, now they go back to that life. Nagsisinungaling na naman. Dati nagsisinungaling lang sa magulang. Ngayon, pati sa asawa, nagsisinungaling na. We just go back when we fail, when we experience a failure. We just revert back to the old life. That's the most comfortable, the easiest way to cope up with life, to continue in life. Jesus knows this. Alam ni Jesus ito. Witness ni Peter ito. And so Jesus for the third time, he came. At alam ko yung punta niya doon, hindi lang yung mga disciples. He came for Peter. Last Sunday, he came back for Thomas. What was Thomas' problem? Anong problema ni Thomas? Hindi kagaya ng problema ni Peter. Peter denied Jesus.

Thomas' problem is he has doubts. And Jesus came back for him, to help him with his doubts and unbelief. And we know what happened. Thomas' faith in Christ was boosted up. He made that confession, my Lord, my God, then he went and followed Christ.

Peter has a different problem. He failed Christ, denied Him. Not once, not twice, but three times in a row. So how, how on earth will Jesus ever trust me again?

So, nunan dun siya sa boat, habang nagkukuha sila, the scripture says he was naked. Ang sabi dun sa Bible na binasa natin, he took his outer garments. But in Greek, what they're saying there is that he was naked.

So habang nagfishing sila, puro silang mga lalaki nagfishing doon, Peter was naked. Wala siyang damit. And so he was there, and a man came on the shore, may taong lumapit sa shore, at tinanong sila, Children! Dawag sa kanila children. Children, do you have any catch? May nahuli ba kayo? And they said, you know, we've been fishing all night and we haven't caught anything.

And Jesus said, okay, you cast your net on the right side of the boat, and they did, they cast. You know, when you're desperate, walang nangyayari sa buhay mo, kahit anong advice na lang tatanggapin mo, diba?

Kung lahat ng advice ginawa mo na, palpak pa rin ang buhay mo, so kahit na loko-loko na yung nag-advice sa'yo, tatanggapin mo nalang. So sabi niya, cast your net on the right side, what's the difference between the left and the right? I don't know.

Wala dito sa left, wala sa right. Sabi ng tao sa kanila, cast it on the right side. So he did. And when they cast the net on the right side, true enough, there was a large catch of fish. The net started to break, but it did not break. Then when they realized that they had a great catch, they remembered a past event. That's how he met the Lord. Diba? Remember how he met the Lord? They were casting nets and wala silang huli, and then the Lord came to them, may nahuli silang marami. Naalala ni Peter. But he cannot point out who that person is on the beach calling to him.

Then it was Saint John, the beloved, who said, hey Peter, it's the Lord. Bakit si John ang nakarecognize, hindi si Peter? Well, John is the closest among them to Jesus. When you love someone, you will know that someone. Amen? Kilala mo talaga yung tao na yan.

So sabi ni John, that's the Lord. This is what happened to Peter. When Peter realized it was Jesus, the man who told them to cast their net on the right side, it was Jesus himself on the shore calling to them. You know what he did? He took his clothes and started wearing his clothes.

Now, listen. May naalala akong taong ganyan din. Hubad at biglang nagbihis nung lumapit ang Diyos. Go back to Genesis. Remember Adam? When Adam sinned, the Lord looked for him. At sabi ni Adam, nagtago ako dahil hubad ako.

The shame of failing someone is matindi yan sa puso natin. If you failed your wife, you failed your children, you failed the church, you failed your community, the shame of that is there. Malalim yan.

Peter was ashamed of himself. And so when he realized it was the Lord calling him, he put on his garment. Just like Adam, when Jesus was looking for him, kumuha siya ng mga dahon at tinakpan yung sarili niya sa dahon. Nahiya din siya. And Peter jumped out of the boat and he came to Christ. And finally, they saw each other. No, hindi na binasa sa gospel. It was cut short ang gospel natin. We read the short version. But this is what happened next.

After they had breakfast, Jesus spoke to Peter. He told Peter, Peter, do you love me? Now, how many times did Peter deny Jesus? Three times.

Now, Jesus gave Peter an opportunity to reaffirm his love for Jesus three times also. Jesus knows the problem of Peter. Alam ni Jesus ang problema ni Peter. Jesus knows the weakness that Peter had. Ang problema ni Peter ganito. Napansin niyo sa kanya, hindi siya nang higit ng tawad. When he approached the Lord, he didn't just say, Jesus, please forgive me, I have sinned again.

He did not say that to Jesus because Peter knows Jesus very well. Alam niyang tinatawad siya. Sa pamilya, diba ganyan? Pag nagkamali tayo, sometimes hindi na tayo humihingi ng tawad. Humihingi na lang tayo ng pizza, diba?

In the family, it's a place where you don't need to say you're sorry because automatically you're forgiven. Peter, he knows that Jesus has forgiven him already.

So when he came to Jesus, he did not say, Lord, Lord, I'm sorry, please forgive me. I denied you three times. Peter already knows Jesus has forgiven. What was his problem?

What was the problem of Peter that is eating him up, that is so unsettling in his heart? The problem of Peter is this, will Jesus ever believe me that I love him? Maniniwala pa kaya ito kung sasabihin kung mahal ko siya?

All of us have failed a loved one, a friend in the past many times. And that question in our mind, will my friend still trust me? It looms over your mind. And this is the problem of many young people today. Itong problema ng mga young people today, they have failed their parents and somehow they feel that their parents don't trust them anymore.

They feel that their parents don't know that they love their parents. Pero sa sobrang dami ng palpak nila, nagdududan na sila kung alam ba ng magulang nila. That's why they go out trying to prove them, prove their parents that they love their parents and in that process, they continually fail.

Okay? Kagaya na isang bata na pinagalitan ng tatay niya at pinagalitan ng nanay niya. Sa sobrang galit ng nanay niya, sabi ng nanay niya, lumabas ka dito. So lumabas yung bata. Sabi ng bata, mahal ko si mama. Hindi niya alam, mahal ko siya.

So ginawa ng bata, kinuha niya yung mga orchids ng mama niya. Pinutol niya yung mga orchids. At dinala niya kay mama niya, Mama, I love you. Nung nakita ng nanay yung mga orchids niya, putol na, sabi ng nanay, Wa!

At napagalitan na naman. And so the child keeps on doing things, keep on pursuing things just to prove themselves that they love their parents. This is the problem of many young people today.

Because in mature love, in mature love, you don't have to prove. Both parties will know that you love each other. Hindi mo na kailangan i-prove yan. Amen?

So this is the problem of Peter. He doesn't have a problem kung pinatawag siya ni Jesus or not. He doesn't have a problem with that. His problem is will Jesus ever know that I still love him, that I really love him? Will he ever trust me again?

Kaya nung tinanong siya ni Jesus, sabi ni Jesus, Jesus look him in the eye. Tinignan talaga siya sa mata niya. Alam ni Jesus ang problema niya.

And Jesus looked at him in the eye and he said to Peter, because that is the question of Peter, does Jesus know that I love him so much? I failed him, I denied him three times. Will he ever know that I love him? Will he ever believe me when I say that I love him? Hindi na siguro maniniwala ito.

And that's the most unsettling question of his life. And Jesus knows that. And so he looked at Peter, sabi niya, Peter, do you love me?

Strange yung sagot ni Peter. Kita mo yung sagot niya? Yung tanong na yan, do you love me, is honestly answerable by two answers. Yes, I do or no, I don't. Yan lang yung sagot niya. Peter, do you love me? Pwede mo lang sagutin niya niya, yes, I do. Or you can also say, no, I don't.

That question, do you love me, can be answered by two answers. Pero tingnan niyo yung sagot ni Peter. Peter, do you love me? Peter said, Lord, you know. Mat ganyan lang sagot niya. Because in his heart, the question really is, ang tanong niya talaga, Lord, alam mo ba, mahal kita?

Yun ang importante. Kwentong isang tatay sa akin, sabi niya, before his father passed away, sabi niya, yung tatay namin napaka-stricto. Pinapatrabaho kami ng tatay namin, maaga pa, pinapatrabaho na kami ng tatay namin.

Hala, grabe yung tatay namin. And it is because hindi mapintas yung tatay, that tatay wanted his children to be successful. Kasi yung tatay nila lumaki. Lumaki yung tatay niya na walang pera. Walang dignidad ang pamilya nila. Mahirap lang. And so, inaapi-api lang yung tatay nila.

Kaya itong sabi ng tatay, pag nagkapamilya ako, tutulungan ko yung mga anak ko na umaman sila at magkaroon ng dignity. Kaya tinuruan niya yung mga anak niya to really work hard. Because the father loves his children.

So yung mga bata, wala talaga silang nakitang ibang bagay sa tatay nila.

Talagang tinulak silang magtrabaho, kumayod sila. That's why when his father was already dying, nag-usap sila ng anak niya. Ang sabi ng doktor sa anak niya, sabihin mo nang kailangan mong sabihin, your father has only 5 days to live.

And so they talked. They talked about what sons and fathers don't talk about.

Bihira mo itong maririnig yung tatay at anak na lalaki mag-uusap. They started to exchange I love you's.

So the son, yung kakilala ko, sabi niya, pa, mahal na mahal talaga kita pa. Itong tanong ng tatay niya, anak, mahal din kita. Pero, alam mo ba? Alam mo ba yan na mahal kita?

Yun ang importante sa tatay, alam mo ba na mahal kita? Baka sa mga panahon na yun na maliit ka pa, tinutulak kitang magtrabaho, tinutulak kitang kumayod, baka iba ang tanggap mo nun.

So tinanong yung anak niya, ikaw, to, sayod mo man nga palangga ako ikaw. And my friend said, pa, I never doubted your love for me. Because all your life, I know what you're doing is just for me.

So alam ko yun. When the child left, an hour after the father died, peacefully, no suffering, parang lumitaw lang siya. And probably it's because he was happy that his son knows that mahal niya yung anak niya.

And that's the question of Peter, does Jesus really know, does he trust me enough that I love him? Yan ang need ni Peter, I want to hear. And Jesus looked him in the eye, sabi niya, Peter, do you love me? And Peter said, you know, you know.

Well, there is a silent conversation between them, not in words, no? What Jesus is actually telling Peter, itong sinasabi nila sa mga mata lang nila, not the words, you know, probably.

Peter was asking Jesus, Lord, do you really know that I love you? And this is what Jesus, Peter, I know. Yun ang minsahin nilang dalawa. Peter, alam ko, I know that you love me. I trust, I trust in your love for me.

You may have failed, you may have denied me three times, but Peter, I don't doubt your love for me. Do you love me, Peter? Lord, you know that I love you. Do you love me, Peter? Lord, you know. And the eyes of Jesus was telling Peter, Peter, I know, I know, I really know that you love me.

And it was that love that was affirmed by Christ that gave Peter back his confidence to follow Jesus until death comes.

Amen? Hindi na natakot si Peter mamatay para kay Lord because now he was given the chance to understand, to settle that question in his life, in his heart, does Jesus know that I love him? Yes, I know, Peter.

I know, Peter. I trust you. I trust in your love. That's why Jesus said to him, follow me. You know, in the Gospel of John, the calling of Peter did not happen in chapter one.

It happened here. This is where Jesus really called Peter to follow. In our life, pareho tayong lahat in terms of relationship, we have failed someone that we love.

And that question in our mind loomed over us. Yan ang nagbibigay ng lungkot sa buhay natin and we are unsettled with our commitment. We fail in our commitment because it looms over my mind, does Jesus know that I love him?

Does my wife know that I love him? I love her. Does my children know that I love them? And the answer of Jesus to that is yes, I do. I know that you love me. That will bring confidence in you. Yan ang kailangan natin kung susunod tayo kay Jesus.

If we are going to follow him all the way to the cross, that's the confidence we need to have. I know that Jesus knows that I love him. Amen. Shall we stand?