

Homily of Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, 2026

Ezekiel 18:25-28; Psalm 25:4-9; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21:28-32

In the gospel, the first son replied to his father, “I will not,” afterwards changed his mind and did his father’s will. But the second son replied, “Yes, sir,” but did not do his father’s will. Jesus used the parable to address the chief priests and the elders who refused to accept him as the savior sent by God. The second son represents them. While the first son represents the tax collectors and prostitutes who repented and believed in Jesus. The gospel helps us to understand the first reading. The Jewish leaders were the virtuous persons who turned away from virtue to commit iniquity, while the tax collectors and prostitutes were the wicked who turned away from wickedness.

The readings invite us to examine the way and manner we live out our callings and responsibilities. We make all kinds of commitments, promises, oaths, vows, covenants, and agreements when we accept our various callings and responsibilities. Many times, we fall short of them. All the great speeches and colorful ceremonies eventually mean little or nothing. In this way, we are like the second son.

St. Paul advises us in the second reading that to be true to our callings and responsibilities, we are to have in us the same attitude that is in Jesus Christ who did nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory. Rather, he emptied and humbled himself and was obedient to God to the point of death on a cross.

We can name from the readings three vices which make us fall short of our callings and responsibilities. The vices are pride, selfishness, and disobedience. These vices have resulted to the downfall of many people. Therefore, in order to preserve our lives, our callings, and our responsibilities, we are to keep away from these vices.

Because of Christ’s humility, obedience, and selflessness, “God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name...” Therefore, if we embrace these virtues (humility, obedience, and selflessness), God will also raise us to greater heights.

The first reading says, “When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity and dies, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die.” There are many instances of people who start very well, then veer off to bad ways, and end up badly. We see this happen in all aspects of life. Revelation 2:4-5 summons us, “I hold this against you: you have lost the love you had at first. Realize how far you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at first.”

The first son replied, “I will not,” but afterwards, he changed his mind and went.” This son teaches us to reflect over our decisions and actions. We are encouraged to admit our errors, take necessary corrections, and make necessary changes. The virtues of humility, obedience, and selflessness enable us to take corrections and make changes with less stress. The vices of pride, selfishness, and disobedience keep us blind to truth. Disobedience drains more energy, time, emotional stamina, and stress than simply following instructions or guidance.

The second son replied, “‘Yes, Sir,’ but did not go.” Failed commitments, broken promises, broken oaths, broken vows, broken covenants, and broken agreements have left us with a broken world, broken countries, a wounded Church, broken institutions, broken communities, broken homes, broken marriages, broken relationships, broken friendships, and broken hearts. These failures and brokenness cause much pain and distress to many people and the death of many people. We pray for conversion and healing.

Yes, all of us have fallen short in our callings and responsibilities in one way or another. We pray for the grace of humility, obedience, and selflessness. We pray with today’s Psalm, “Your ways, O Lord make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior. ... Good and upright is the Lord; thus, he shows sinners the way” (Psalm 25:4-5, 8).

Yes, all of us are broken in one way or another. We dwell in broken places. We have to deal with broken people and broken situations all the time. We live in a broken society and in a broken world. Our imperfections and afflictions are our brokenness. Sadly, some people seek vanities to fix their brokenness. Some people seek solutions from unholy spiritual forces. Vanities and unholy spiritual forces lead to addictions, bondage, and destruction. Scripture says, “Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!” (Ecclesiastes 1:2). “Those who trust in their riches will fall” (Proverbs 11:28). “They multiply their sorrows who court other gods” (Psalm 16:4). “Better the threshold of the house of my God than a home in the [palace of the devil]” (Psalm 84:11).

We are invited to bring our falls and brokenness to God for all the graces we need. He is the only One who puts us together again and sustains us. He heals brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3). Amen.

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