

June 13, 2020 – Saturday of the 10th Week of Ordinary Time



**"Avoid 'standing on two boats;' instead, being firm and resolute' to stand on Christian principles!"
(1 Kings 19:19-21 and Mt 5:33-37)**

**HAPPY FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, FRIEND OF THE POOR
AND FINDER OF LOST THINGS.
ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, PRAY FOR US**

A Chinese proverb goes thus: "Do not have each foot on a different boat." "Standing on two boats" is a trend that we find in our modern world: People taking double standards in their life in the society outside and life at home inside, Friends changing their loyalties to one another depending on the circumstance and situation, for their own favor, Spouses cheating on one another, for their own selfish and sinful pleasures and Business partners entering into secretive contracts with other companies, for unaccounted gains. Many such examples of people not being "true to their words" make today's Gospel extremely relevant in our context.

In the Gospel, Jesus says: "Let what you say, simply be 'Yes' or 'No'" (Mt 5:38). Continuing the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives His instructions to His disciples, on how one should remain "focused on one's faith". The Sermon on the Mount can be also termed as a "Teaching on Challenging Mediocre Lifestyles".

In a court of law, people take an oath that they will tell the truth and nothing but the truth. The giving of the oath is a recognition that, left to themselves, witnesses might not always tell the truth. Pressure needs to be applied to people, to tell the truth by getting them to swear an oath on the Bible. When Jesus calls on his disciples not to swear at all whether it is by heaven or by God's throne or by the earth, he is calling for a quality of truthfulness in speaking that renders the taking of an oath superfluous. His disciples are to speak truthfully at all times, saying 'Yes' when they mean 'yes', and 'no' when they mean 'no'.

Jesus, all through the Sermon on the Mount, picks up various topics anger, adultery, divorce, vows and love for enemies, etc.... And raises the level of their understanding for a Christian. Today's Gospel presents Jesus speaking on the topic of "vows and promises" emphasizing on the aspect of remaining focused and clear, in one's words and deeds. Jesus categorically declares that for a Christian, there ought to be no "double standards" a Yes, ought to be a Sincere Yes and a No, ought to be a Firm No

A Sincere Yes to God and a Firm No to Satan. A Sincere Yes to Holiness and a Firm No to Sin. A Sincere Yes to the Kingdom of God and a Firm No to the ways of the world. The reason to have this conviction is our Faith and Confidence in the Lord. He is the Lord Who remains the same always: "Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and forever!" (Heb 13:8)

We need to, therefore, ask ourselves: Am I focusing on sincerity and honesty, in my daily actions and words or do I sometimes take "double-standards"? Am I having the proper balance in living the Christian life even though I face many pressures or do I lose the balance and fall into the pits of lethargy, disappointments, and laxity? Am I having the confidence and the trust in the Lord and bank on Him at every turn of life or do I experience perplexities of anxiety, despair, and despondency?

The world today clearly promotes and propagates insincerity, unfaithfulness, and duplicity. Glamour and popularity are the motivations. Business-orientations and short-term gains are the catchwords in relationships. In such a "tricky and trying" situation, a Christian is called forth to avoid "standing on two boats" and instead, "be firm and resolute" to stand on Christian Principles. We are invited to be encouraged by the lives of Prophets Elijah and Elisha who were highly zealous and staunch for the ways of God. The call of Elisha – wherein he turns away completely from his former way of life – and offers himself wholeheartedly to God, is a great inspiration for all of us (1 Kings 19:19-21)

Our Master Jesus reminds us: **"I prepared for 30 years in silent contemplation of the Christian Virtues, 3 years in preaching them and 3 hours – on the Cross – in standing firmly in defense of them! What about us?"**

Today we celebrate the Feast of St Antony of Padua one of the most loved Saints, all over the world. He is popularly invoked by those who have trouble finding lost objects. But in own day, he was more popular as the "Hammer of Heretics" due to the powerful witness of his life and preaching. An account in the life of St Antony tells of an Ordination of some Franciscan and Dominican friars both and the superiors desired that someone be designated to preach. With no one prepared to speak, St Antony was pressed by the other friars in attendance (both Franciscans and Dominicans) to take on the unprepared task. He hesitated but was encouraged by the others to speak "whatever the Spirit of God gave him to say." Anthony proceeded to preach with great brilliance, to the shock of all those in attendance. His zeal, oratory skill, and many conversions won him the title "Hammer of Heretics." His brilliance made him the

foremost preacher in his day. May the Powerful Intercession of the “Hammer of Heretics” – St Antony of Padua help us to always be firm and resolute in our Christian Living.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, let me “Say ‘Yes,’ when I mean ‘Yes.’ and say ‘No,’ when I mean ‘No,’. Lead me to live in truth in every instance and to conform my thinking, my words, and my deeds to the truth. Let me allow Your Word of truth to penetrate my mind and heart and to form my conscience.

Jesus, I Trust In You