

4th Sunday of Advent - December 22, 2024
Homily by Bp. Romie- Jun Peñalosa

Four candles nakailaw na. We started out this Advent walang nakailaw na kandila. Then we start with one, two, three, four. Then Christmas is around the corner already. Amen?

So kanina on my way here, nagpatutog na ako ng mga Christmas songs. Okay?

Wala pa tayo sa Christmas pero malapit na malapit na. Amen?

If we have truly prepared our hearts, then the joy of Christmas will truly change our lives.

Kailangan natin magbago. There are many things that the Lord has in store for all of us.

Ang dami talagang bagay na nilalaan ng Diyos para sa atin.

So much blessings are awaiting for us. And all we need to do is to change.

Magbago ang buhay natin.

May mga blessings kasi na hindi pupunta sa atin kung hindi tayo magbabago.

Pagwaldas ka sa pera, palagi kang nauubusan because you cannot control yourself in spending money.

Then when you pray to God for more money, a day will come na walang darating sa'yo.

Because you are not prepared for it. The more the Lord will give you money at waldas ka,

then it will all come to waste. Mas lalong malulungkot ang buhay mo.

That is why the challenge for us this Advent, like I've said, is not just to turn away from sin.

Ang unang word na narinig natin noong Advent na ito is repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent.

And repentance is not just turning away from your sin. Repentance is not just saying no to my vices.

Repentance is about having a change of heart. Amen? Magbago ang puso natin.

A change of heart, a heart that would begin to appreciate and value what God is doing for us.

A heart that will be inclined to love God. That is what we need to cultivate in our hearts in this season of Advent.

How you have prepared yourself and your heart for this Advent season, that will set the tone and the rhythm of your journey this year. Amen?

Kung talagang pinaghandaan mo at hinandaan mo yung puso mo this Advent, then all throughout this year 2025, we do not know what will happen in 2025.

Noong patapos na yung taon, umuwi ako sa Antike. I just went home right after Christmas.

I went home and you know, andami ko ng plano for that year. I did not realize that I would have an accident.

Wala sa plano yun. And you see, that's the beauty about faith because life is full of uncertainties.

Ngayon, nandito ka sa ibabaw. Pagising mo sa umaga, nandito ka na sa baba. Okay?

Life is uncertain. Maraming tao nagplano pumunta sa Boracay itong araw na to.

Kanina, hindi na nagising. Hindi na sila gumising. You see?

Life has its twists and turns. Okay? Life is so full of uncertainties.

Kaya nga talagang dapat handa tayo sa buhay natin.

And as we face 2025, as we take on our journey walking with the Lord this year, we prepare our hearts. And how do we prepare our hearts?

We prepare our hearts by cultivating these four virtues. Kailangan talaga natin yan.

Hope, faith, joy, and the last candle is love.

Yun ang i-cultivate natin sa puso natin.

If you cultivate these four virtues in your life, no matter what life will throw at you,

you will be prepared to face life. Amen?

Kailangan natin i-prepare ang puso natin.

And in preparing our hearts, we say it takes discipline.

And discipline takes a process. Hindi yan overnight. Okay? Hindi yan overnight.

Kaya nga, minsan natatawa ako dun sa mga nagdadayet.

Okay? Sino nagdadayet dito?

Oh, wala na ng raise ng kamay. Di ba?

Sinatatawa si Bishop sa mga nagdadayet.
Isang araw pa lang hindi pumakain. Magtitimbang na.
Ay, hindi ako kumayat. Mabigat pa rin. Isang araw pa lang hindi kumain.
Okay? Magtitimbang na. At malulungkot dahil hindi bumaba ang weight.
You know, it's a habit.
And if you want to change your life, you have to change your habits.
Hindi magbabago ang buhay natin kung hindi natin baguhin yung mga habits natin.
And the habits that we form will be determined by the discipline.
Ang disiplina natin sa buhay natin.
One of the things that I challenge the priests and the clergy,
sabi ko, baguhin natin yung prayer life natin, yung pagdadasal natin.
We have to change it. Okay?
We have to change the way and how we pray.
Sabi ko nga, sa mga pare, sabi ko, we treat prayer like it's an activity.
Kaya pag activity, we have to do. We have to do.
Prayer for us is an activity na kailangan gawin natin.
And sometimes, sa sobrang daming ginagawa, sa sobrang daming bagay sa listahan
natin,
if we put prayer at the last part, we have to change the way we pray.
We have to treat prayer not as an activity that we need to do.
Prayer is something that we surrender to.
Prayer is something that we give our life to.
Binibigay natin ang buhay natin dyan sa pagdadasal.
It's not something that I do, it's something that I have already surrendered my
life to.
We have to change.
Hindi magbabago ang buhay natin kung hindi natin baguhin yung mga habits natin.
Today, we're going to speak about ten minutes, five minutes na.
Bilis ng oras. Okay?
Our gospel today, makita natin si Mary,
right after the angel announced to her that she is going to be a mother and the
mother of our Lord.
Yan ang blessing ng Diyos sa kanya.
But you see, the blessing of God, it comes with responsibility.
Ang problema sa atin, ang ugali natin,
Ayaw natin ang responsibilidad, pero gusto natin ang blessings.
But the greater the blessings that you expect in your life,
the greater your preparation because those blessings has a responsibility.
Pag nagdasal ka, Lord, bigyan mo ako ng malaking farm.
Tapos natutulog ka, magigising ka ng alas-ji sa umaga.
Eh, huwag ka na mag-farm.
Kaya hindi ganyan ang buhay ng farmer, diba?
Hindi ganyan.
When you pray for a family, nagdadasal ka,
Lord, bigyan mo ako ng pamilya, bigyan mo ako ng asawa.
Give me children.
And you know, when you pray, children are a blessing from the Lord.
But the more children, the greater the responsibilities.
Amen?
Yan ang ano dito.
That's why Mary, right after the fiat, ano itong fiat na sinasabi?
Fiat is Mary's response to the angel Gabriel when he said,
You are going to have a child.
The fiat of Mary is this.
Be it done according to your word.
Be it done unto me according to your word.
Mary's response to the blessing and the announcement of God's blessing in her
life
was to surrender herself to the will of God.
Yan ang fiat.
And after surrendering herself to the will of God,
our gospel today picks up and sabi dito,
Immediately, Mary went out.
Pakatanggap niya ng blessing sa Diyos.

When she surrendered herself to the will of God,
she immediately went to Bethlehem.
Ephrasa. Bakit?
Kasi binalita din ng angel na yung pinsan niya, si Elizabeth,
is already with child.
Now Elizabeth was already old and barren.
Hindi talaga nagkaanak yan.
Hindi lang sa edad, talagang may diferensya siya.
Her womb is closed.
But now the angel said to Mary,
You know, your cousin is already pregnant.
Six months na yung cousin mo.
And right after the announcement of the angel,
Mary went out. Kagad.
You know how far Bethlehem is from their place?
It's more than 80 kilometers.
Linakad lang ni Mary yun.
And it is a hill country.
Bulubundok yun yan.
80 kilometers, to give you an idea,
from Calibo, lampas ng Putotan, yan ang 80 kilometers.
Linakad lang ni Mary yan.
You know, was it easy?
Was it convenient?
No, it was not easy.
It was not comfortable.
Amen?
But something propelled her to go.
Ano yun?
Well, we found out in our Old Testament reading,
when the prophet Micah was prophesying,
he was talking about Bethlehem, Ephrathah.
Sabi niya, Bethlehem, you are not the biggest city.
You are not a well-known city.
But out from you,
out from you, a king will come.
A king that will rule.
A king that will be so great,
he will rule over Israel.
And not only Israel, but the whole world.
Why?
What is the lesson we learned from the first reading?
That God is able to use lowly things for great things.
Minsan, naiinis tayo.
Masyadong napaka-ordinaryo ng buhay ko.
You know, sometimes we get so frustrated
because, you know, wala akong achievement.
I am not a successful person.
But God is saying in our first reading,
No.
You may be the lowliest.
You may be the most insignificant person.
But God can bring out a great work in your life.
Amen?
And that's what God did to Mary.
At nung ginawa ng Diyos yan kay Mary,
Nako, napa-in-love si Mary kay Lord.
You know?
Sometimes we don't reflect on what God has done for us.
Hindi natin iniisip yung mga ginawa ng Diyos sa atin.
We forget.
That's why sometimes, everyday,
nagririklamo tayo.
Ang daming problema.

Ang daming kakulangan sa buhay.
Hindi man lang tayo nag-iisip at alalahanin natin
yung mga bagay na ginawa ng Diyos sa atin.
Muntik tayong mamatay ang iba sa atin dito.
Pero ang nandito tayo ngayon, buhay.
I had an accident.
I almost died.
But I'm here today, alive.
When I remember those things what God has done for me,
then I begin to appreciate this God
who does not do anything for us
na may kapalit.

Amen?

Why would God choose someone that is lowly?
Because He does not expect to get a return.
He does something for people who could not repay Him.
Why?

Because that is God's love and generosity.
The second reading teaches about
how Christ, in a conversation with God,
sabi niya, sabi ng Diyos sa kanya,
I do not desire burnt offerings and everything,
but to you I give you a body.
I give you the gift of incarnation.
You will be born on earth as a man.
What is Christ's response to God?

Okay?

What is Christ's response?
Christ's response to God is,
let your will be done.
He surrenders Himself to the will of God.

Amen?

It is a blessing that Christ would come to us as a man,
that He may be able to save us.
But how did Christ respond?
Do to me as you will.
You know, He surrenders Himself to the will of God.
In our Gospel today,
right after Mary surrendered Herself to the will of God,
He went to Elizabeth.

What is she going to do there?
She went there to help
because she found out her cousin is already pregnant.
Alam niyang matanda na si Elizabeth.

Alam niya na,
excuse me,
Elizabeth used to be barren.
So she went there in spite of the distance.
Kahit gaano ka layo,
she went there.

Ilang months nang buntis si Elizabeth nung dumating siya?

Ha?

Six months na nung dumating si Mary dun sa bayan nila Elizabeth,
six months pregnant na siya.
And in our Gospel, how many months did she stay there?
How many months did she stay?

Ha?

Nung dumating siya six months na si Elizabeth,
ang sabi sa Gospel natin,
He stayed there for three months.
So anong ginawa ni Mary? Nine months.
She went there to help Elizabeth sa panganganak niya.
I don't know kung marunong siya magpaanak.
I really don't know.

But definitely she stayed there until Elizabeth gave birth.
You see,
after surrendering your heart to the will of God,
that surrender of your will to God,
it will propel you to go out and serve others.
Amen?

Kaya pag naririnig ko yung mga servants ng Panginoon,
nagririklamo,
may mga workers na nagririklamo,
ang daming trabaho,
palagi na lang ako,
that person is having a problem of receiving God's love.
Because when we know that God loves us,
we naturally surrender to that love.
Amen?

Naturally.
You give your heart to that person
who loves you enough to die for you on the cross.
Binibigay po yung puso mo.
You surrender your heart to the will of that person.
And when you do that,
automatically,
you are propelled to serve others.
You love God,
and you love your neighbor as yourself.
Kaya nga kung hirap na hirap tayo
at nagririklamo tayo in serving other people,
you check your heart,
do I love God?

Mahal ko ba ang Diyos?
Kasi kung mahal mo ang Diyos,
then you will surrender your heart to that God.
And if you surrender your heart to God,
service of your fellowmen is natural.
Walang nagutos kay Mary,
hindi na siya inutosan,
o tulungan mo yung pinsan mo doon.
No.

Immediately.
You see that word,
she hurriedly,
sa New King James,
hurriedly,
nagmamadali siya.
You know,
in our life,
ang dami nating iniisip,
balang araw tutulungan ko si ganito.
Balang araw tutulungan ko yan.
Balang araw paglilingkuran ko yan.
Puro balang araw.

Tinamaan ka na ng bala,
hindi ka pa rin nakapagtulong.
Okay?

But look at Mary,
right after,
nagmamadali siya.
Okay?

Nagmamadali siya.
She's not trying to delay things.
You see,
yan ang taong in love.
You know?
Pag in love yung isang tao,

magkikita kayo ng love mo
ng alas 9,
alas 6 pa lang,
naligo ka na.
At nagperfume ka na.
Ready ready ka na.
Hindi ka nagdi-delay.
It's the same thing with Mary.
She did not delay.
Right after she surrendered
herself to the will of God,
she went out
and she went out
to help Elizabeth.
So what happened?
The fiat of Mary,
her surrender to the will of God,
turned out to become
the magnificat of Mary.
Because of her love for God,
surrendering herself to the love of God,
then praises came out from him.
Una rooh gahalin rooh matood nga pagdayaw.
Rooh matood nga pagdayaw
hagpagsimba sa Diyos,
it comes from a heart
that is surrendered to God.
Why is it surrendered to God?
Because it loves God.
You don't find it hard
to surrender your heart
to someone you love.
Amen?
The gift that you give
to the person you love
is your very self, binibigay mo.
And the same thing with us.
Then when our hearts
are surrendered to God
because of our love for God,
then we are propelled to serve
and in serving others,
that is where praise,
thanksgiving,
and joy comes out of your life.
Yan lumalabas yan.
So I challenge us.
Lampas ako ng five minutes.
I challenge all of us
in this season of Advent,
as we have prepared
as we enter the season of Christmas,
magbago na tayo.
We have to change.
Amen?
We have to throw away
those things that hinder us
from loving God
and from surrendering
our hearts to Him.
If we do not surrender
our hearts to God,
we will not experience
the joy.

We will not experience,
you know,
the joy of serving others.
Hindi yan.
Magiging malungkot
ang buhay natin.
Sabi nga nila,
ang taong nagmamahal
ay hindi nagtitiis.
Totoo ba yan?
Ang taong nagmamahal
hindi nagtitiis.
And I believe that's true.
Kasi,
yung nangliligaw
sa barrio doon sa amin.
Pag nangliligaw,
isang dikon ko nangligaw
bago siya kinasal.
Nangligaw siya.
Yung asawa niya, taga bundok.
Pag ligaw niya doon,
sabi ng tatay ng babae sa kanya,
buhatin mo muna
yung isang sakong palay na yan,
dalhin mo sa kabilang bundok.
Binuhat niya.
Binuhat niya.
Pinasan niya yung isang sakong palay.
E nandun yung liniligawan niya.
Asawa niya na ngayon.
Mabigat ba?
Sabi niya, hindi.
Ang gaan nga eh.
Hindi siya nagtitiis.
Bakit?
Umiibig kasi.
Di ba?
Mahirap ba pumunta sa simbahan?
Ang hirap, father.
Tinatamad ako magpunta sa church.
Hindi ka kasi umiibig eh.
Ibigin mo.
Surrender your heart to the Lord.
Once you fall in love with God,
hindi ka magtitiis.
Ang taong nagmamahal ng lubos
ay hindi nagtitiis.
Amen?
It's a joy to serve God
and to serve others.
I pray for all of us
that as we have prepared our hearts,
we will learn to surrender our hearts to the Lord.
And when we do that,
that will set the tone of our journey this year.
Ano man
ang mga bagay na pagdadaan natin sa buhay,
hindi tayo matatakot.
Hindi tayo matutumba.
Hindi tayo mapapagod.
Bakit tayo ay nagmamahal ng lubos?
Amen?
Love never fails.

Love never...
It's the most powerful force on earth,
ang taong nagmamahal at umiibig.
Love never fails.
That's why if you love,
you will never fail as well.
Let's all stand.