

Homily

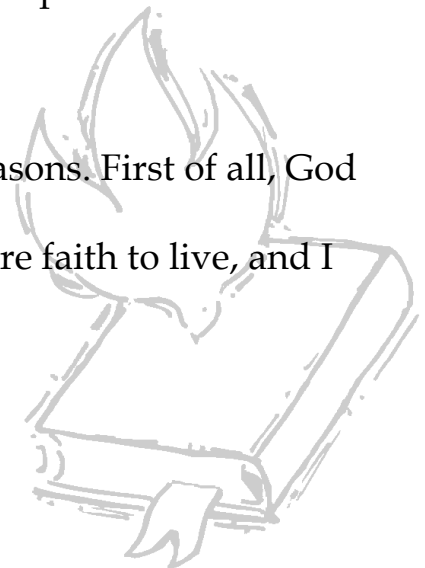
25th Sunday OT – A

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
September 19-20, 2026

Is 55: 6-9
Ps 145: 2-3, 8-9, 17-18
Phil 1: 20-24, 27
Mt 20: 1-16a

Because I am the midst of year thirty-one as a Catholic priest, there are days I just say to the Lord in prayer, “Lord, if you want to take me today, this is the day to do it. I would love to be with you, gazing upon you for the rest of my existence.” As with so many others prior to me such as our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Paul, St. Bernadette, St. Thérèse of Lisieux and so many others, they know and I know that life in heaven infinitely is more grace-filled than the sufferings we have to endure on earth. In many ways of the world are not going to change, as history has taught us, and we are put here on earth to make a difference with the little things because in many ways, people are people and sin is sin. Satan is very good at what Satan does.

I think God keeps me around for a couple reasons. First of all, God keeps me around because I have a whole lot more faith to live, and I



need to change my life in a whole other way in order to be closer to God. Maybe each day, God is teaching me to be stronger in the faith, to learn about the faith better, to be with God better, to be a better servant, so that each day, as I learn about God, and I grow, I actually open my eyes even more to what I am supposed to do.

The other reason I think I am around because, I honestly believe in my heart, there are so many lost children in our community, so many vulnerable and needy souls who feel like no one loves them. Despite the evils I have to endure in this ministry, maybe God is keeping me here in the Border Town Communities because I am here to take care of them and I am here to take care of you.

I am told by my staff, I am told by other priests, I am told by those who are family and friends, that no priest would ever empty their pocketbooks like I have done for all of you, and that I should think about my future, think about retirement and think about tomorrow, even though the bible tells us to do just the opposite (for those who care what the bible has to say) – “Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil (Mt 6: 34).”

So many people say to me, “Why do you continue to serve when sometimes people really are very ungrateful?” This is the way of the world – it was this way for the prophets, it was this way for Christ and it certainly is the way for my staff and for me. We notice that sometimes people park outside our churches and houses and act as if the staff and I are living in a glass houses so they see what we am doing and report what I am doing to the diocese or whatever (the law might call that “stalking” and there are consequences to those actions as well). In Chapter 29 of a book I have written, I mention that I live in St. Anne’s two days a week, I live at St. Patrick’s four days a week and on the seventh day, I try to get away – such is life. If people want to sit outside the house and file weekly reports about me, that is fine – if they go after the staff, then you can guarantee yourselves that I will do something about this. I warn you now... do not go after the staff; go after me instead.

One time, my secretary told me that the diocese called and said, “We need to make sure Fr. Pete is spending time at the parish.” My problem is not my workload – I am an overachiever and I overwork. I have a

myriad of other issues, but not that. I also know that a lot of the things that I do generate the kind of resources that help the parishes out;. In the last year alone, we have created two parking lots at St. Patrick's (and the price to do this was absolutely ridiculous) and we are about to create a parking lot at St. Anne's that was in disrepair for years. I recorded a thirteen-minute Online Homily for the picnic Mass that caused parishioner Janice Gelino to respond, *"I just looked at your homily for the picnic. When you see the changes gradually over 7 years, it seems fantastic. But when you see them in 14 minutes, it seems impossible. Thanks to all who made this happen."*

Why do we endure the negative responses and the Online "trolls" who demean what we do, even though what we do is mandated by Christ in the gospels? The answer is simple – we do this out of Christian charity for the poor, the poor in spirit, the vulnerable, the children... *we do this for you!* If you care about people as much as you do, you do what you can, and there are so many people who have benefited these communities in so many different ways at St. Anne's alone from what we have done.

In the last month alone, we have celebrated ten baptisms, five quinceañeras, a slew of blessings and other services for those in need. We have provided hundreds of meals for the needy and we have celebrated so many sacraments for those who suffer. This summer, I asked Father Uriel Martinez to cover two months of Spanish Masses in 2027 for me. I have invited Fr. Diego Maximino to celebrate the Guadalupe Mission for us in December.

We have so many needs, so many people that are coming forward. I had a wedding meeting at the time I wrote this homily where a couple said to me that they were lost and needed to feel welcomed. So we welcomed them and loved them... just like we do for you. I know that members of our Hispanic Community are not joining us because of my Spanish skills (because I am a B student in Spanish, at best). They know that here they are welcomed, and they are loved, and it is a lot of work to take care of them.

Maybe God keeps me here because I allow people to come in when others do not. Perhaps I realize that my goal and purpose in life is to make sure that as many people know that they are loved, to empty

myself, to do that *kenosis* thing, which I keep referencing from Philippians 2, to keep emptying yourselves like Christ did for us, to give people a chance to get to the kingdom of heaven by your example, whether you welcome them at the first, third, sixth, ninth hour or even the last hour. The goal in our Christian life, the *joy* in life, is to forget about yourself, and help others get to heaven.

One of our theologians named Hans Urs von Balthazar would say that the more Christ emptied himself and negated himself, the more he revealed himself as God. That is the example we need to follow. We need to empty ourselves like Christ did. We are not God... we are useless servants and we are only doing what God has asked us to do. (Lk 17: 10). We are useless servants, but God has kept us on earth for a reason.

I am here and my purpose is because I am here to take care of those who feel that nobody loves them, to take care of the least in the kingdom of heaven, because the more we empty ourselves and become the last, the more God sees what we are doing and hopefully will respond

accordingly. That is why I am here for you and that is why we do what we do for you, because we love you that much.

Please know, we will continue to make that sacrifice come what may. Go ahead, treat my house as a glass house. For those who continue to stare at me, who keep stalking me, keep doing what you are doing, as long as you stay away from the staff. Keep reporting to the diocese what I am doing if that will keep you away from others. My ministry is to take care of the poor and needy, to take care of you, no matter who you are, so hopefully, one day, your hearts will be opened and all hearts will be opened to see God's love so that we can do the same for every single person that we meet. This is our prayer.