

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A)  
2-15-2026 Homily.

I. Introduction

There was once a Catholic mission established on an island in the South Pacific, and once a month a missionary priest arrived by seaplane to minister to the islanders. During his brief overnight visit Father would say Mass, baptize infants, witness marriage vows, anoint the sick, hear confessions, and pray for those who had died. However, before any of these things happened, there was a unique ritual that always occurred. The village chief would greet the priest; after embracing him, he would hand the priest a clump of grass. The priest would return the clump of grass to the chief, who would then pass it on to someone else. According to the island custom, the clump of grass was a reminder of God's presence on their island, and it symbolized harmony and peace as it was passed on to everyone there, one person at a time. Finally, it would be returned to the chief, who again gave it to the priest, symbolizing the spiritual unity of all those present. Only at that point was it time to begin Mass.

On one occasion, however, this sacred ritual was interrupted; Father was told there was going to be a delay, as there had been a bitter disagreement between a father and his son, and the clump of grass had not been exchanged between them. The priest, village chief, and islanders all waited and waited—but eventually it was apparent that the father and son were not going to be reconciled that day, so there was no Mass on the island that month, nor the month that followed. It was only in the third month that reconciliation at last occurred within that family, allowing Mass to be held once again (Brian Cavanaugh, T.O.R., *Fresh Packet of Sower's Seeds*, #49). This is a wonderful illustration of Our Lord's teaching in the Gospel, and an important reminder to all who claim to be His followers. We cannot truly worship God unless we acknowledge and respect His presence in all the people around us.

II. Development

Our God is not only a God of power and majesty, but also a God of harmony and order. In the 2nd Reading St. Paul speaks of God's wisdom as being hidden and mysterious, for His ways are far above our ways—but His wonderful and amazing plan of salvation has been revealed to us through Jesus. That's why each of us determines our own destiny—for as the 1st Reading says, everyone chooses either life or death, good or evil. We can freely cooperate with the Lord's saving plan, and thereby be in harmony with creation itself—or we can stubbornly go our own way, thereby following the path of sin that leads only to suffering, alienation, and ultimately spiritual death. These of course, are very serious matters--and it's in this context that we can understand Our Lord's teaching in the Gospel. Jesus did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it; He came not to ratify or approve of our sinful human nature, but to call us to a higher way of living, one truly in line with God's creation. This is why we must avoid spiritual laziness, hatred or anger toward others, sinful or adulterous thoughts, false oaths or empty words, and anything else that undermines our relationship with God. Most of the time we're so concerned with our lives, responsibilities, and interests and activities, that we don't see the bigger picture. As Christians, however, we're called to believe that nothing happens by chance, that our choices do affect others, and that sincere prayer or good deed is never wasted—and if we truly believe this, it will affect the way we live.

### III. Conclusion

A husband and wife lost their only son, and the strain this placed on their marriage was unbearable, and they separated; he moved out to the country, while she stayed in the city. One day the husband had to come into the city for business, and afterwards went to the cemetery where his son was buried. While standing by the grave, he heard someone coming, and turning, saw that it was his estranged wife. Their mutual first impulse was to turn away from each other—but they had a common interest lying in that grave, so instead they clasped hands and prayed in silence for their boy. That turned out to be the first step in resuming their married life together; they were reconciled by death (Roy B. Zuck, *The Speaker's Quote Book*, p. 324).

We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son Jesus; we are also supposed to be reconciled with each other, for only in this way can we begin to offer the Lord the true and sincere worship He deserves. There are many reasons why people are so angry and upset in our world today, and some of them are quite justified or understandable—but if we hold onto our anger, we end up hurting ourselves most of all—for if our fists are clenched in anger, our hands are not uplifted to God in praise, nor open and able to receive the blessings and gifts God offers. Even if the other person is completely at fault, and even if he or she has rebuffed our efforts to be reconciled, the Lord still expects us to forgive that person in our hearts, no matter how badly we were wronged and hurt. The sign that we're able to do this is our willingness to pray for that person, truly desiring his or her spiritual well-being, even if we have to protect ourselves by having nothing more to do with him or her.

It's this willingness to pray humbly and sincerely for the people we don't like or get along with that shows Jesus we're serious about following Him and living as His disciples. Therefore, let's all take a moment of silence right now to think of anyone with whom we're alienated or angry, and ask the Lord to bless those persons in the way they need most. . . .

Now we are truly in harmony with God and His creation, and now we are ready to continue worshipping Him in this Mass.