

## **Homily for Monday of week 11 in ordinary time by Fr Euloge Kasine aa**

Today, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I invite you to meditate with me on “You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods”. Today’s first reading shows how envy can lead to immoral and unhuman actions or reactions.

For all the times we failed to let love take the control of our actions or reactions; for all the times we were dominated by hatred which lead us to betray God and neglect our neighbour, we confess and say: Kyrie eleison, Kriste eleison, Kyrie eleison

### **Meditation on: Kings 21: 1-16; Matthew 5: 43-48**

You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods

The psalmist says: the deceitful and bloodthirsty man the Lord detests (Psalm 5:6).

As children of God, we believe that the love of God is the same for everybody. God’s salvation is for all. Yet, we also believe that God gives to each one of us according to his Holy will. It is a fact that in the matter of material possessions, we do not have the same. Some have more than others. However, even if some have less than others, we believe that the Lord our God is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings (Cf. Ps 145: 17).

God gives to some more so that they may be able to share with others. And he does this according his Holy Will. This will calls also those who have less to share with love the little they have with others. The poor widow’s offering in the New Testament (Cf. Mk 12: 41-44; Lk 20: 45; 21: 4) and the story of the prophet Elijah and the widow of Zarephatth in The Old Testament (Cf. 1 Kings 17: 7-16) are some eloquent examples showing that no one has the right to be unkind. Everybody is has the duty and right of being a kind and caring person.

Unfortunately sometimes because of envy and hatred both those who have more and those who have less can fall into the act of sin; they can want to take someone else’s property. Remember, God never supports theft and the feelings of envy, greed, and jealousy in reaction to what other people have. God calls people to respect and honour the possessions of others.

It was really shameful for Ahab, who had all that he needed as a king to covet the possession of an ordinary man, Naboth. It was shameful for Jezebel, Ahab’s wife to think that in order to please her husband, she had to kill Naboth. “Why are you so dispirited, that you will not eat?” asked Jezebel, Ahab’s wife. Ahab answered: “I have been speaking to Naboth of Jezreel; I said: Give me your vineyard either for money or, if you prefer, for another vineyard in exchange. But he said: ‘I will not give you my vineyard’.”

“Cheer up,” said the wife, “and you will feel better: I will get you the vineyard of Naboth of Jezreel myself”. “So, she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, sending them to the elders and nobles who lived where Naboth lived. In the letters she wrote, Proclaim a fast, and put Naboth in the forefront of the people. Confront him with a couple of scoundrels who will accuse him like this, “You have cursed God and the king.” Then take him outside and stone him to death.”

See how people are victims of envy and hatred. Envy will make one forget the goods he/she possesses in order to possess other people’s properties. Many people in our societies are victims of false accusations. Many people in our societies suffer or die because of the poison of envy. Envy can lead one to deprive others of their rights. Envy can lead to a murder.

Naboth was put to death just because the king wanted his possession. When Jezebel, the King’s wife heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, her husband, “Get

up! Take possession of the Vineyard which Naboth of Jezreel would not give you for money, for Naboth is no longer alive, he is dead.” “When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth of Jezreel and take possession of it.” What a cynical and criminal spirit!

One of the things which shocks in this story is to see how the envy of one person mobilizes people to do evil. Because of wanting to satisfy a selfish desire of a man, people direct their energies to evil. Isn't shocking to see a rich man stealing the goods of the poor? If you were a judge what sentence will you give the King and his wife and all those who participated to the murder? Is it going to be “Eye for eye and tooth for tooth”? Which justice are you going to do to Naboth and his family? Remember, the deceitful and bloodthirsty person the Lord detests. “You shall not kill,” says the Lord our God.

Besides, the seventh and tenth commandments focus on respecting and honouring the possessions of others. We sin in one way or another against “You shall not steal” and “You shall not covet thy neighbour's goods”. There are many ways of taking other people's properties. For instance, to deprive workers of their just wage is in a sense to steal. Embezzlement, fraud, tax evasion, and vandalism are all considered extensions of violations of the Seventh and tenth Commandments. How are we going today to obey God's commandments, which make the happiness of his people?

O God, wash us more and more from our guilty; our offenses truly we know them; our sins are always before us. What is evil in your sight we have done (Cf. Ps 50).