



Gospel Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Anyone who is not against us is for us. If your hand should cause you to sin, cut it off.

John said to Jesus, 'Master, we saw a man who is not one of us casting out devils in your name; and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him.' But Jesus said, 'You must not stop him: no one who works a miracle in my name is likely to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us.

'If anyone gives you a cup of water to drink just because you belong to Christ, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.

'But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone round his neck. And if your hand should cause you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life crippled, than to have two hands and go to hell, into the fire that cannot be put out. And if your foot should cause you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life lame, than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye should cause you to sin, tear it out; it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where their worm does not die nor their fire go out.'

Reflection by Greg Sunter

The first part of today's gospel deals with the disciples' jealousy at someone else 'cashing in' on Jesus' name and authority. It is a continuation of their limited understanding about the message and ministry of Jesus. They still cling to an idea that Jesus is going to rise up in power against the forces of Rome and, in the aftermath, they are going to be sitting pretty as associates of this powerful figure. The disciples have been blinded by their dreams of glory and forgotten that the real story is that people are being cured and having demons cast out. Rather than celebrating the healing that is occurring in Jesus' name, the disciples are jealous that it's someone else who is getting the credit. Jesus assures them, and us, that any good work being undertaken genuinely in his name is to be welcomed. It is a reminder to us that sometimes we look down on the work of others because 'they're not one of us', or 'they're not doing it our way'.

The second portion of the gospel is one of the really challenging teachings of Jesus. Drawing on the image of the community as being a whole body, the teaching suggests that it is better to remove the part of the body/community that is causing sinfulness than have the whole body/community perish. It is a concept we are familiar with in modern medicine: sometimes it is necessary to remove diseased tissue to prevent the spread of disease. We are reminded that if we surround ourselves with negative people and negative influences, we too will become negative. If we separate ourselves from negative influences and surround ourselves with positive ones then the positive aspects of our lives will flourish.

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The Living Word

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

26 September 2021

First Reading Nm 11:25-29

Are you jealous on my account? Who decrees that all people may prophesy?

The Lord came down in the Cloud. He spoke with Moses, but took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the spirit came on them they prophesied, but not again.

Two men had stayed back in the camp; one was called Eldad and the other Medad. The spirit came down on them; though they had not gone to the Tent, their names were enrolled among the rest. These began to prophesy in the camp. The young man ran to tell this to Moses, 'Look', he said, 'Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.' Then said Joshua the son of Nun, who had served Moses from his youth, 'My Lord Moses, stop them!' Moses answered him, 'Are you jealous on my account? If only the whole people of the Lord were prophets, and the Lord gave his Spirit to them all!'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 18:8. 10. 12-14. R. v.9

(R.) The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart.

1. The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul.
The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple. (R.)
2. The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever.
The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just. (R.)

3. So in them your servant finds instructions;
great reward is in their keeping.
But who can detect all his errors?
From hidden faults acquit me. (R.)

4. From presumption restrain your servant and let it not rule me.
Then shall I be blameless,
clean from grave sin. (R.)

Second Reading Jas 5:1-6

Your wealth is rotting.

An answer for the rich. Start crying, weep for the miseries that are coming to you. Your wealth is all rotting, your clothes are all eaten up by moths. All your gold and your silver are corroding away, and the same corrosion will be your own sentence, and eat into your body. It was a burning fire that you stored up as your treasure for the last days. Labourers mowed your fields, and you cheated them – listen to the wages that you kept back, calling out; realise that the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. On earth you have had a life of comfort and luxury; in the time of slaughter you went on eating to your heart's content. It was you who condemned the innocent and killed them; they offered you no resistance.

Gospel Acclamation See Jn 17:17

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Your word, O Lord, is truth:
make us holy in the truth.**

Alleluia!