

Reading 1

Numbers 11:25-29

The LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses. Taking some of the spirit that was on Moses, the LORD bestowed it on the seventy elders; and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied.

Now two men, one named Eldad and the other Medad, were not in the gathering but had been left in the camp. They too had been on the list, but had not gone out to the tent; yet the spirit came to rest on them also, and they prophesied in the camp.

So, when a young man quickly told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp," Joshua, son of Nun, who from his youth had been Moses' aide, said, "Moses, my lord, stop them." But Moses answered him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the people of the LORD were prophets! Would that the LORD might bestow his spirit on them all!"



Reading II

James 5:1-6

Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you; it will devour your flesh like a fire. You have stored up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on earth in luxury and pleasure; you have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter. You have condemned; you have murdered the righteous one; he offers you no resistance.

Gospel

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

At that time, John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him.

There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me.

For whoever is not against us is for us.

Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire.

And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna.

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

*Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time***Scripture Background**

In today's Old Testament reading the Spirit of God rests wherever God wills. We get the impression that God's grace is not earned but freely given. In this reading we hear that God places the Spirit on seventy elders. When the Spirit was placed upon them they prophesied. God knew that Moses alone could not meet all the needs of the Israelite people. In order to help Moses, God shares the Spirit with others. But Moses' assistant Joshua is concerned about other people receiving the gifts of the spirit outside of the people who were present when they were originally given. Moses has a more generous view. He responds to Joshua by assuring him of how great it would be if the Spirit of God were to rest upon all the people of the Lord. This passage makes clear that God's grace can never be completely limited or subject to control.

In the gospel today Jesus does not tolerate the formation of an elite group of followers who exclude others. We hear that John is concerned about a person who is not part of the original group of followers because he is casting out demons in the name of Jesus. Jesus forcefully lets his disciple know that the person who is doing good works in Jesus' name should not be stopped. It is clear that Jesus accepts anyone who helps the disciples in the course of fulfilling their mission.

Sin can cut us off from God. In the gospel we hear that whatever causes us to sin should be eliminated. The point made here is that there is nothing worse than being cut off from our creator due to sin. Jesus is not advocating self-mutilation, but he uses harsh examples to make the point that sin separates us from God.

1. Do you know of any groups that exclude people?

2. What message does Jesus give us today about forming groups that leave certain people out?

3. We hear about a hand, foot and eye in this reading. What gets in the way of your relationship with God?

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholics believe that every person is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, we are to treat people with dignity and respect. That goes for us as well. Each of us has been created as a beloved child of God and therefore we should value ourselves—mind, body and soul. Because every person is created equal in the sight of God, we ought to view all people as equal in worth and value.

The vision of social justice for Catholics includes the value of human work. We believe that as people created in God's image, we go on with God to finish the work of creation by helping to provide for human needs. We believe that the ability to work should be available to everyone. This includes men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants. Society should assist individuals in finding work without discrimination.

Catholic Social Teaching makes clear that we are not created alone but together. We are a community and by working together the people of God help to make God's presence known throughout the world.

4. Do you feel that all people are treated equally in your school and community?

5. What can you do to break down the barriers of discrimination?
