

Sunday 30th September 2018

"For he that is not against us is for us"

Reading 1: Numbers 11:25-29
Reading 2: James 5:1-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 19:8,10,12-14
Gospel reading : Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

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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.'"

Meditation:

The devil couldn't stop the seventy-two Israelite elders from receiving the Spirit (see Nm 11:25-26). However, he hoped to be more successful by enticing the Israelites to quench the Spirit (1 Thes 5:19) through jealousy (Nm 11:29). Demons could not prevent a man from using Jesus' name to expel them (Mk 9:38). Therefore, they tried to stop the continuation of this man's ministry of deliverance (Mk 9:38). Once again, the demons tried to accomplish this through jealousy. Jesus is dead set against jealous people being sad at others' successes and thereby saddening the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). He warns that if we're jealous of other people's hands because they work better than ours and can make more money, then we should cut off our own hands rather than remain rooted in jealousy (Mk 9:43). If we're jealous of others' speed, strength, or health, we should cut off our feet (Mk 9:45). If we're jealous of how others look, we should tear out one of our eyes (Mk 9:47). If you have a "jealous bone in your body," Jesus says to take out the bone or amputate that part of your body. Jealousy is one of the works of the flesh (Gal 5:20). "I warn you, as I have warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!" (Gal 5:21) Repent of jealousy. Don't compare yourself with others. Believe in God the Father's love for you as His child.

Jesus reprimands his disciples for their jealousy and suspicion. They were upset that someone who was not of their company was performing a spiritual work in the name of Jesus. They even "forbade" the man "because he was not following us". Jesus' reply is filled with wisdom: "No one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me." Are we not like the disciples when we get upset at the good deeds of others who seem to shine more than us? Paul says that "love is not jealous... but rejoices in the right" (1 Cor. 13:4,6). Envy and jealousy, its counterpart, are sinful because they lead us to sorrow over what should make us rejoice -- namely, our neighbour's good. The reason we may grieve over our another's good is that somehow we see that good as lessening our own value or excellence. Envy forms when we believe that the other person's advantage or possession diminishes or brings disgrace on us. Envy is contrary to love. Both the object of love and the object of envy is our neighbour's good, but by contrary movements, since love rejoices in our neighbour's good, while envy grieves over it. With the love that God puts into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). This love seeks the highest good of our neighbour. Ask the Lord to fill you with the fire of his purifying love that you may always rejoice in the good of others, even in those you find disagreeable.

The love of Christ not only frees us from envy and jealousy, but it compels us to give generously, especially to those in need. Everyone in need has a claim on us because they are dear to Christ and bear the image and likeness of God. God created us in love for love. The charity we show to our neighbour in his or her need expresses the gratitude we have for the abundant goodness and kindness of God towards us. Jesus declared that any kindness shown and any help given to the people of Christ will not lose its reward. Jesus never refused to give to anyone in need who asked for his help. As his disciples we are called to be kind and generous as he is.

Gregory of Nyssa, a fourth century church father comments on this passage: "God never asks his servants to do what is impossible. The love and goodness of his Godhead is revealed as richly available. It is poured out like water upon all. God furnished to each person according to his will the ability to do something good. None of those seeking to be saved will be lacking in this ability, given by the one who said: 'whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward.'" Ask the Holy Spirit to transform your heart by the fire of his love that you may wholly desire what is good for your neighbour.

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. Do you rejoice in the good that others do? How can you overcome envy?
 2. How do you want God to help you overcome jealousy?
 3. Are you grateful for God's mercy and kindness towards you? How are you ready to show that same kindness and generosity towards your neighbour?
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"Lord, fill me with your Holy Spirit that I may radiate the joy of the gospel to others. May your light and truth shine through me that others may find new life and freedom from sin and the corruption of evil."

Source: www.dailyscripture.net, author [Don Schwager](#)