

Reflection Questions

- How often do your comparisons to others, including those in recovery, get in the way of your true intentions and personal relationship with Christ?
- This week's gospel reading concludes with the following words from Christ to His disciples:

*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.*

- What is your reaction to this command from Jesus?
- What are the things in your life that may be causing you to sin and cut yourself off from the Lord?

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time



If your ego is the root of all your troubles, destroy it. It is better to be a humble servant of the Lord than master of your own hell.

In this week's gospel reading, we hear Jesus share about the great lengths we are to go in order to remove sin—or anything that gets in the way of our relationship with God—from our lives. In recovery, we know the value of going to any length in order to find freedom from addiction and new life in Christ. Often, that means overcoming interpersonal barriers like jealousy, greed, resentment, and fear.

Even the disciples had their share of complaints, bickering, and petty rivalries. Last week we heard a few disciples arguing over who among them was the greatest shortly after Christ told them of his destiny. This week, we hear a remark about someone driving out demons who is not part of the "inner circle":

*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.*

John seems to have been disturbed that someone outside of the group might get some undeserved credit, ignoring the fact that demons were being driven out and that good was being done. Of course, the pettiness of John's comment can be found in some of our own attitudes, both as individuals and as a collective Church. In doing so, we lose sight of our mission and find ourselves jealous, nit-picking, and holding tight to our social privileges rather than making our way to the peripheries to meet others in their suffering.

A similar story is found in our first reading this week. God bestows His spirit upon a group of 70 elders traveling with Moses. Two members were absent from the gathering when this took place, but were similarly seized by the spirit of the Lord which stirred some jealousy among those in the camp.

*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!"*

Recognizing how others use their spiritual gifts to advance God's kingdom, regardless of their affiliation, can positively impact our lives and the support around us. We can do the same by advancing our gifts into the world while staying in tune with the Word of God and being guided by the twelve steps.

When we are unified in our recovery, we know that it is the mission of our Church and journey with the Lord that really matters. Sharing the good news with others and being an instrument of God's peace takes priority over trivial matters that do nothing but weight us down. May the Lord bestow His spirit upon us all!