

The Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 30, 2018

Reading 1: Nehemiah 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 2: 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.'"

Responsorial: Psalm 19

The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart.

The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul;
the decree of the LORD is trustworthy,
giving wisdom to the simple.

The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true,
all of them just.

Though your servant is careful of them,
very diligent in keeping them,
yet who can detect failings?
Cleanse me from my unknown faults!

From wanton sin especially, restrain your servant;
let it not rule over me.
Then shall I be blameless and innocent
of serious sin.



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Gather Your People

*Gather your people, O Lord.
Gather your people, O Lord.
One bread, one body, one spirit of love
Gather your people, O Lord*

Draw us forth to the table of life
brothers and sisters, each of us called to walk in your light

We are parts of the body of Christ
needing each other, each of the gifts the Spirit provides

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Psalm 19 (alternate refrain)

*Your words are spirit and life.
Your words are spirit and life.
Your words are spirit and life, O Lord.*

Go Make a Difference

*Go make a difference, we can make a difference
Go make a difference in the world
Go make a difference we can make a difference
Go make a difference in the world*

We are the salt in the earth, called to let the people see
The love of God in you and me
We are the light of the world,
not to be hidden, but be seen
Go make a difference in the world

We are the hands of Christ, reaching out to those in need
The face of God for all to see
We are the spirit of hope, we are the voice of peace
Go make a difference in the world

Text: Based on Matthew 5:13-16. Text and music © 1997, Steve Angrisano and Thomas N. Tomaszek.
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“Ground Rules” for Small Group Faith Sharing

Maintain confidentiality – “Whatever happens in small group stays in small group.”
Judgment-free zone – You don’t have to agree with every one, but you have to have respect for everyone.
No “shut downs” or “put downs” – See Christ in one another, BE Christ to one another.
Don’t be a “discussion hog” – Be sure that everyone that wants to gets a chance to share.
Leave room for the Spirit – Silence is OK! Not everyone has to share.
Practice active listening – Avoid interrupting, fidgeting, criticizing, lecturing, or thinking of what you’re going to say while another person is speaking.
Questions are a guide - You do not have to answer all of them or go in order.
Be open – God is doing amazing things!

Petitions

Our response: “Lord, send us your Spirit.”

Closing Prayer

Pour out your Spirit, O God, over all the world to inspire every heart with knowledge and love of you. Grant that we who confess Jesus as Lord may shun whatever is contrary to this faith and give witness to your love that has saved us in Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

1. What word or phrase from the Gospel resonated with you?
2. In the Gospel, what does Jesus have to say about people outside his “inner circle” ministering in his name? Can anyone lay exclusive claim to the reign of God as Jesus revealed it? What can we learn from this?
3. In the First Reading, Joshua wanted Moses to stop Eldad and Medad’s prophesying because they didn’t follow the rules. Can you relate to this kind of problem? Is Moses’ response in this reading related to Jesus’ response in the Gospel? How?
4. Does the Spirit work in religions other than our own? Ever? Always? What might the Spirit be doing in them? How could, “By their fruits you shall know them.” be a good test?
5. In the Second Reading, James tells us that wages withheld from the harvesters cry aloud to the Lord of hosts. How should this inform our decisions about things like livable wages, fair trade practices, and the dignity of work? James says that the rich got their wealth at the expense of the poor. Do we see examples of this today? How can we work to ensure humane treatment of workers and payment of a living wages?
6. Read Pope Francis’ words below. What does he say about the good other people do? Do Christians have the monopoly on doing good?

Words from our Holy Father

“If he is not one of us, he cannot do good. If he is not of our party, he cannot do good.” And Jesus corrects them: “Do not hinder him, he says, let him do well.’ The disciples were a little intolerant, closed off by the idea of possessing the truth, convinced that “those who do not have the truth, cannot do good.” This was wrong. ... Jesus broadens the horizon, reminding us that the Lord created us in His image and likeness, and we are the image of the Lord, and he does good and all of us have this commandment at heart: do good and do not do evil. All of us. The objection is swift: ‘But, Father, this is not Catholic! He cannot do good.’ Yes, he can. ... The Lord has redeemed all of us, all of us, with the Blood of Christ: all of us, not just Catholics. Everyone! ‘Father, the atheists?’ Even the atheists. Everyone!”

-Pope Francis, America, A Papal Cure for Intolerance, May 24 2013