



CELEBRATING AT HOME

26TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Doing good in the name of Jesus (Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48)



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Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

We are the body of Christ.

**We are gathered with the whole Church,
in this moment of prayer.**

Preparing to hear the Word

Lord Jesus,
you help us to recognise you at work in others.

Lord Jesus,
you show us the way of service.

Lord Jesus,
you bring us to life and freedom.

Scripture Reading (*Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48*)

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 around 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 - *Doing good in the name of Jesus*

The disciples are on a steep learning curve as Jesus instructs them about what true discipleship is all about.

Last week, using a little child, Jesus tried to show them that real leadership is about putting aside our own needs for social status, self-importance, power and wealth and to give ourselves fully to the service of others.

But the disciples are slow learners. In this Sunday's Gospel, when they report that they tried to stop someone casting out devils in Jesus' name just because 'he was not one of us', they probably expected praise from Jesus. Instead, they got a rebuke.

True discipleship is not about holding the mystery of the Kingdom to our self, to dispense as we see fit, deciding who merits our love, concern and service, and who does not.

Both principal readings this weekend remind us that the mystery belongs to God who chooses and uses whomever God wills in the service of human beings and the kingdom. The true disciple needs to have the humility to see that he or she is simply one among many whom God has chosen. In the leadership of service there is no place for those who exult themselves or believe themselves to be holders of some privileged position with the power to control the mystery. And jealousy of others distorts God's intentions and compromises our efforts.

In the second part of the Gospel Jesus redirects the disciples' attention to the evil that may be found *inside* the Christian community. Bad example or exploitative behaviour can be a stumbling block to more vulnerable members of the community. Such people stand in contrast to the 'man who is not one of us' but who is doing a good thing by using the name of Jesus to heal people – he is a 'true' but unknown disciple of Jesus. Those who claim to be true disciples may very well find themselves to be outsiders and excluded from the kingdom.

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The graphic sayings are really an invitation for all would-be disciples to search their own hearts and to do the work of pruning away those things which stand in the way of being a true disciple.

Jesus shifts the emphasis from the good deeds of the outsider at the beginning of the reading, to the sinful actions of members of the community towards the end of the reading. Perhaps he is inviting the disciples, and us, to look at our own motivations and behaviour rather than to judge other people.

Prayers of Intercession

Help us lend our hands
to your work of compassion,

Give us eyes to see your vision
for us and the whole human family.

Help us to appreciate and affirm the gifts of one another.

May we never suffocate these signs of your life.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Closing Prayer

In these changing times, O God,
your Spirit is at work in us,
in our church and in our world.
**May our lives reveal your presence
so that our work transforms and heals the world.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Blessing

May we carry your blessing, O Lord,
into every moment of the coming week. Amen.



Journey into the Light

This resource is presented by the Carmelites for use by individuals, families and small groups as a prayerful celebration of the Word of God to help prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist with our worshipping communities. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We are also conscious of the many people who, for various reasons including sickness and infirmity, cannot physically attend the Eucharist. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family.



The Carmelites
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