

26th Sunday of the Year B



Who can detect all his errors?

From hidden faults acquit me. (Ps 18:13)

First Reading

Numbers 11:25-29

The Lord came down in the Cloud. He spoke with Moses, but took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the spirit came on them they prophesied, but not again.

Two men had stayed back in the camp; one was called Eldad and the other Medad. The spirit came down on them; though they had not gone to the Tent, their names were enrolled among the rest. These began to prophesy in the camp. The young man ran to tell this to Moses, "Look," he said "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Then said Joshua the son of Nun, who had served Moses from his youth, "My Lord Moses, stop them!" Moses answered him, "Are you jealous on my account? If only the whole people of the Lord were prophets, and the Lord gave his Spirit to them all!"

Second Reading

James 5:1-6

An answer for the rich. Start crying, weep for the miseries that are coming to you. Your wealth is all rotting, your clothes are all eaten up by moths. All your gold and your silver are corroding away, and the same corrosion will be your own sentence, and eat into your body. It was a burning fire that you stored up as your treasure for the last days. Labourers mowed your fields, and you cheated them – listen to the wages that you kept back, calling out; realise that the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. On earth you have had a life of comfort and luxury; in the time of slaughter you went on eating to your heart's content. It was you who condemned the innocent and killed them; they offered you no resistance.

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 round 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."

Meditation

The authentic way to be Christian is imaged for us in the figure of the crucified Christ. In stretching out his arms on the cross, he opens himself to all humanity. Therefore, universal understanding and acceptance ought to characterize the disciple of Christ.

Joshua failed to recognize the prophetic charism of two men who did not come to the Tent of Meeting. John did not understand that one could expel demons in the name of Jesus without being among the Twelve. Under pretext of orthodoxy, we often tend to identify belonging to Jesus with some elitist option. No one can appropriate the spirit of the Risen One to any confessional, social, or even political position. The gospel stands in judgement against all ecclesiastical provincialism, all claims to monopolize the power of the Spirit which is its source.

The temptation to exclude is no more legitimate within the Church than outside it. In our assemblies, there are so many simple and devout whose religion may seem insufficiently enlightened and whose faith may appear childish. No one has the right to discount or despise them. Much less does a claim to liberty of the Spirit give anyone the right to scandalize these simple believers.