

26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year

September 30, 2019

Brothers and sisters, we have gathered as a community of God's own family. Today, the good Lord gathers the elders of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai, so that they may gain in his spirit. So, also, we are gathered with every human being of good will. Together we seek righteousness, peace, witnessing to the truth of God's love and our commitment to care for one another. We have gathered to worship the Father.

People of God, let us center our reflections today on the Book of Numbers 11:25-29 and Mark 9:38-48. These two passages of the Bible speak of our call to discipleship, the gifts of the Holy Spirit which empower us onward in our service to God and neighbor. They also remind us that those are many when God has chosen outside this fold to be his true prophets. The gospel further reminds us that we are not omniscient. We have to be conscious of the little things which are capable of undermining our eternal joy.

In the first place, the Lord calls. He calls as He wills. He calls as He pleases. His calling is based on His omniscience, not in accordance with human limited conscious. The Lord sees the past, future and present, even the most hidden part of our unconsciousness. He also takes the needs of His people into consideration when seeking out a prophet for them. He considers qualifications, experiences, also actions, associations and affiliations during employment. But the Lord himself is all different. "We know that for those who love God all things work well for them. For those whom He foreknew, he also predestined to the image of His Son," "and those whom he predestined He called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified." Romans 8:28-30.

The truth remains that the good Lord equips the saints in their ministries for the building up of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:12.

Therefore, our prayer is that the Lord of work sends forth good laborers into His vineyard. Mark 9:38. The Lord is capable of sending a prophet from among us gathered here. He can choose from among those at home or in the camps. He can also choose from among those casting out demons in His name. True inclusiveness helps us to realize that there are other sheep which do belong to the fold. The Lord uses them also and wants us to care for them. Do not exclude them and do not stop them from calling that name which saves. For any one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved – especially if they do the will of the Father who is in heaven. Romans 10:13; Matthew 7:21.

The attitude of Joshua and John in today's scriptures is a challenge to all who cling to the name of Christ. All Christians, especially Christian leaders must pay attention to their attitude and motivation to their assigned ministries. Charisma, services and responsibilities are not meant to convey the arrogance of superiority and feudalism. No one has the monopoly of God's spiritual gifts. "Not one of us" is not a Catholic expression.

Being inclusive disciples will help us to be vigilant in our behaviors so that we don't lead anyone, especially the innocent or ignorant to sin. The Lord will not hold guiltless both those who call His name in vain and the one who lead any of these little ones to sin. Exodus 20:7; Luke 17:2, Matthew 18:6, Mark 9:42. Behold the punishment for misleading the innocent, especially causing them to sin is great. It would be better that a millstone be hung around the neck of the culprit and be thrown into the sea, than to cause these innocent little ones to sin. Luke 17:2.

Therefore, we must reprioritize the cost of our salvations. Many things are pleasurable. Many things are "good". Many things are important. But only one thing is necessary. Eternal salvation is the only thing which matters in the final analysis. We have many things loaded up for this journey to the Father; which one of these are you going to throw over-board in order to make your journey light and easy? If your bad associations cause you sin, cut them off. If your bad behaviors and inclinations are your barrier to salvation, cut them off.

Let us cut off the shackles of our lives so that we may serve God and neighbors in spirit and truth.