

Homily: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 30th 2018.

INTRODUCTION

OUR ability to see is a magnificent gift from God to each of us that enables us to navigate our WORLD. It is hard for us who can see to imagine the adaptations that people without sight have to make. Today's Scriptures from God to us are not about physical sight--- but INSIGHT. In His Scriptures by God OUR FATHER to us His Family HIS Word provides us with three major eye-openers, to be found in all three scriptures in today's Mass, to help us grow in spiritual maturity as we come closer to Christ. Each reading is a SPOTLIGHT to guide us on our way. Each reading today is a challenge to deeper sight -- *to insight by me in my life.*

The first reading from the Book of Numbers is about two Jewish men, their names, ELDAD and MEDAD, who were given the spirit of GOD even though they were not on MOSE'S list .We see a lot of writing these days about modern versions of anti-Catholicism .The question at the heart of today's first reading is not about our enemies but about allies. The Church is not the center of a hostile universe. There are many organizations and movements and people who complement and assist the work the CHURCH is doing. They may not carry the name "Christian" but are moved by a Spirit they cannot name, and are doing the work of the Lord they do not know.

EXAMPLES

We see in people who promote the sacredness of life throughout the year. People who raise up family values,

the dignity of sexuality who point out moral wrongdoing on many levels. They may not be members of the Church, but they are our allies in the work of promoting the Gospel. "Whoever is not against us is for us."

That is one insight for all of us from today's story of Eldad and Medad. We need to be aware not only of anti-Catholic forces among us but also of our allies. To paraphrase the Catechism the Holy Spirit is bound to the Church but is not bound by the Church. The Holy Spirit moves as It wills. We should know our allies, in promoting Christ's Kingdom.

The second reading today is from St. James. It is a call to look beyond what we have to the deeper question of what we are doing with it. Here St. James writes about our fellow Christians, our ancestors, who are cheating their servants .His point is wider than one instance. Does my financial prosperity, natural talents and access to various resources benefit the Kingdom of GOD. To adapt a phrase from years ago "Ask not the Lord can do for you, ask what you can do for the Lord".

Finally we come to today's Gospel. In it Jesus speaks about temptations, I experience in my life. There are two sooner or later we get in my life to avoid.

To describe the temptations that come to me in my CD life, Jesus uses very dramatic terms. If your eye, arm, leg, is causing you to sin, cut it off. It is a very graphic way of saying that I should not toy with temptations, in my life.

We can apply the Lord's words to our time by saying; if the Internet is causing you to sin, get a blocking device. If a CD is causing you to sin, throw it out. If friendships or relationships are causing you to sin, distance yourself from them. If television or the Media cause you to sin, read a book. Playing with our Temptations is like playing with fire. Sooner or later, we get burned.

The other temptation is the temptation I can become to others. Jesus speaks about scandal in today's gospel. He says; Those who scandalizes one of His people would be better off on judgment day if they were thrown into the sea. Scandal is in all the papers. The Lord's words apply certainly to those who perpetrate scandal, but also to those who spread news of scandal. When we pass on innuendo, gossip, hearsay, conjecture, detraction, true or not, we are also causing scandal.

It is not only the original wrongdoer who is liable but also those who spread the gossip. Gossip is a huge industry today. It has moved from the backyard fence to the tabloids, Internet News Sites, web logs and talk radio. It is a multibillion dollar industry. Those who spread gossip are causing scandal.

We have three insightful questions raised in all three scripture readings. The story from the Book of Numbers asks us; Do we recognize our allies in the work of the Gospel? St James asks: What are we doing with our assets to serve the Gospel? And the Gospel asks us today: Are we resisting both the temptations that come to us and my being a

temptation to others, by spreading gossip about the wrongdoing of others.

**Do we know our allies (or just my enemies).
What am I doing for Christ with my life? Am I a
temptation to others? My answers to these questions
tell me a great deal about myself, where I stand with
the Lord and the distance I have yet to go. AMEN.**