



INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you were one of the 12 Apostles who have been taught and trained by Jesus for three years. You saw all his miracles and heard all his teachings about the Father. Being part of Jesus' close friends, you share his power to heal the sick and cast out evil spirit. You take time following Jesus. You're happy and confident of yourself being part of Jesus' chosen ones.

How would you feel if you see someone, not part of your group, teaching people about God or even healing as Jesus did? What would you think of that person? What would you tell him or her?
 (Accept all responses)

Let us listen to the Gospel and see what Jesus will tell us about this.



OPENING PRAYER

Come, Spirit of Light

Come, Spirit of Light.
 Open our hearts as you speak to us today
 Come Spirit of Light.
 Brighten our minds to understand your Holy Word
 Come, Spirit of Light
 Hold our hands to keep us in your company
 Come, Spirit of Light.
 Guide our feet to walk closer to you every day.
 Come, Spirit of Light.
 Take away all that will block us to be nearer to you.
 So that we may bring others to know and love you
 Amen.
 Glory be



PHASE ONE
REMEMBER THE STORY OF JESUS

Proclamation of the Gospel Story Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48

Enthroned the Bible on a table with lighted candle)
 A moment of prayerful silence
We will not be able to understand the Word of God unless God himself opens our hearts. Let us now welcome Jesus as he speaks to us through his Word
 Alleluia
 R. Alleluia, alleluia.
 Your word, O Lord, is truth;
 consecrate us in the truth.
 R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: *A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark (9:38-43, 45, 47-48*
 All: *Glory to you, O Lord*



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.'"

Reader: *The Gospel of the Lord*
 All: *Praise be to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Brief Guided silent Meditation / Personal Prayer

What particular lesson does Jesus teach to the Apostles and to us from this Gospel Story?

1.3 Text in Context

Today we continue to read from the Gospel of Mark. Mark does not hide the human weakness of the disciples who have to grasp gradually the teachings of Jesus. Last week, the disciples argued among themselves as to who would be the greatest. Jesus taught his disciples that the greatest among them will be those who serve the least ones. In today's Gospel, the disciple John questions Jesus. Let us see what attitude John showed and how Jesus responded to him about an unknown exorcist who was driving out demons in Jesus' name.

1. Why did the disciples want to stop the person who was healing in Jesus' name? (because this person was not a follower of Jesus)
2. What answer did Jesus give to his disciples? (He told the disciples to let this person continue.)
3. What do you think did Jesus try teach them? (Jesus teaches them that they should not be jealous. Instead, they should remember that all who do what God wants are equal in his eyes and are working together to serve the Kingdom of God)
4. Who are the little ones whom Jesus is referring to in this line: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstones were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.. They are those people who may not belong to the group of his disciples but doing good works in his name?
5. What did Jesus tell about them? Nobody should block their way to grow in their " new found faith" in his name.

6. What is a Gehenna? In the New Testament it is believed to be a place in which fire will destroy the wicked,
 7. What do you think is the cutting off the parts of the body like eyes, feet and hands mean in the Gospel?
 It talks about the seriousness of sin for blocking someone along the path towards God.

**PHASE II REFLECT the Story
 of the Church
 (Teachings of the Church)**



We know that the Twelve Apostles are the close friends of Jesus. They are the chosen ones who follow him. In all the Gospels, we saw how the Apostles accompanied Jesus in his teaching, healing and performing miracles. They gradually feel a strong sense of belonging and shared their Master's work like healing. But human as they are, they tend to develop the fear of "competition."
 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.*"

Like the other disciples, John seems to be jealous of other's good work done in Jesus' name. They are hesitant to see others using Jesus' name for something good. They are afraid that others may attract new followers in doing Jesus's works. This is a threat to their group. They must have thought:
We are blessed to be the "first ones" called by Lord. So we are the privileged ones who can invoke his name.

This attitude happens in Christian families and communities. If we allow discrimination to work in our dealing with others, this creates division. We become strangers to one another. What unhappy life it will be if we classify those around us as *friend/enemy, our group/your group, we are all in/you are all out, these are ours/those are theirs.*

At this point it is good to examine ourselves on how we look on ourselves and others. When somebody has done good things or something pleasing to the Lord, do I rejoice with them or do I envy them. Do I have high regard of myself at the expense of excluding others?

With the unwelcoming attitude of the apostles, Jesus told them:
*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.*

Truly the wisdom of God is different from ours. Jesus defends those who are doing something good in his name regardless who they are. God's love is for all and not exclusive to a group alone. God is free to pour his grace to whoever he chooses. He surprises us because he chooses those we do not expect. Let us not set limit on the graces of God. Let us not restrict God in his being gracious. God is true to his name. He is a loving God. He fills us with his blessings and graces. He dies for all – sinners and virtuous for our salvation.

When did you experience God's graciousness in your life? What special blessings have you received? How do you feel about yourself? How do you feel God's being gracious to you?

The last part of this Gospel Story sounds scary.
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,

Does it actually mean plucking out the eye or cutting off the foot or hand if it causes a person to sin?

More than talking about "who is in" and "who is out" in God's company, is the seriousness of putting a stumbling block to someone's path to get closer to God (holiness). Cutting off such important parts of the body symbolize the great responsibility we owe to one another in our journeying together towards the eternal life - our true home.

We are not saved alone. We can be saved together. We do not only belong to a small community. We are a global community. The Covid-19 pandemic and its effect have brought us to a deeper awareness of our being responsible to one another. (Fratelli Tutti)

God has a dream for all of us. In God's graciousness, he wants all of us for himself. He wants us to be happy here on earth and the life beyond- that is eternal life. Many Saints have passion for souls. For example, St. Magdalene of Canossa would like to go to the gate of purgatory to save souls for God.

**PHASE THREE RESPOND – with/ in my personal
 faith /community faith story**

Do you feel a sense of belonging in your own family or community? What can you do to foster a friendly and loving environment in your home and community in the midst of social distancing and lockdown due to the pandemic?

How do we express our being brothers and sisters as one family in a global community?



CLOSING PRAYER

Act of love

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love.
 I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you.
 I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of those whom I have injured.
 Amen. (From Traditional Prayers)

BACKGROUND FOR THE CATECHISTS

32. Fratelli Tutti 32 (On Fraternity and Social Friendship)

True, a worldwide tragedy like the Covid-19 pandemic momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all. Once more we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together. As I said in those days, "the storm has exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and superfluous certainties around which we constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities... Amid this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another"

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Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls. All men have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the divine beatitude; all therefore enjoy equal dignity

