

## Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Feeling very ill, a tough businessman went to see his doctor. After examining him, the doctor backed away and said, "I regret having to tell you this, but you have an advanced case of highly infectious rabies. It appears you've had it for some time. It will almost certainly be fatal." In shock, the man asked the doctor for pen and paper. "Do you want to write your will?" the doctor asked. The man replied, "No! I want to make a list of all the people I want to bite!"

Dear Friends,

Life is good before bad qualities are added to it. We are born without any of those qualities. As we grow over the years, we learn good and bad things alike. The world was created good, but in history, we read about so many wars inside and outside. Life has become complicated nowadays.

Today's readings tell us to reflect about the unnecessary qualities we have within us and asks us to come away from that. The gospel talks about tolerance and jealousy as well as scandals.

In the first reading, Moses taught Joshua not to be jealous or envy God's grace to people. Eldad and Medad was given the spirit. Joshua was against bestowing the spirit on them. Moses reminded Joshua gently that God is free to choose anyone He pleases as His prophet. Moses promptly corrected Joshua for showing the tendency toward institutionalizing the power and presence of God.

Through Baptism, all of us are made God's ministers and God's prophets. We are filled with God's Spirit and empowered to interpret God's vision and message to the people around us. We are not to grow jealous of those serving the community in positions of greater authority or working for the community in different venues. In short, God has the freedom to give his grace to whom he wants. We cannot confine God to ourselves.

In the second reading James clarifies strongly what is fair treatment of those who are poor. He criticizes those who use the disenfranchised to enrich their own wealth. Accumulating one's wealth at the expense of those who are poor is not the best way to prepare for one's final judgement.

In the Gospel, Jesus talks about jealousy and intolerance. The apostles wanted to take the ownership of healing and God's love for themselves. Jesus told them to broaden their vision of God's love. The church has a long history of intolerance and jealousy. The road

to brotherly love must begin with each of us. In the second part of the Gospel, Jesus warns against scandals, especially those who are the cause of the scandal.

Of course, as we remember Priesthood Sunday and appreciate all the priests in general, we pray for them. Let us support the priests to be faithful to God and in their vocation to the priesthood. Let us be supportive and share their burdens by collaboration.

There are a lot of modern-day scandals. We also need to comfort those who are affected and victimized by the clerical sexual abuse. The European bishops are having synods to talk about the scandals. Pope Francis said this last week after his visit to Slovakia, "I personally deserve attacks and insults because I am a sinner, but the Church does not deserve them. They are the work of the devil."

Jesus makes one thing very clear: every good deed, even the least, will bring good things to us. Every evil deed will bring us harm. That's why Jesus asks us to avoid them. Whatever causes you to do evil, turn away from it. It may be the internet, social media, and other materials.

Christian tolerance is brotherly love; it asks that we bear with the weaknesses of others, without condoning the evil they do. Intolerance is a sign of a weak Faith. Intolerance is also ineffective. It does nothing but damages the cause it seeks to defend.

Church needs to be a place of comfort.