

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

An engaged couple is tragically killed in an auto accident. Having been good people during their lives, St. Peter welcomes them at the pearly gates. An inspiring idea hits them and they ask if they can get married in heaven. St. Peter replies that this is an unusual request and he will have to ask and get back to them. Meanwhile, he tells them to remain at Heaven's welcome station, a magnificent resort with every amenity you can imagine.

St. Peter disappears and weeks pass without the couple hearing from him. They wonder what is happening and are concerned about their future. Finally, one says to the other, "Marriage up here is probably forever. What if it doesn't work out? Can we get an annulment up here?"

St. Peter finally returns and says, "I've got great news for you, you can get married up here." The young couple then raise the question of annulment. St. Peter turns beet red and replies in a scolding tone, "It took me three months to find a priest. How long do you think it's going to take for me to find a lawyer?"

Dear Friends,

Today's readings invite us to reflect on the importance of unity, openness, and radical commitment to the mission of God's kingdom. They remind us that God's Spirit is not limited by human expectations or boundaries and challenge us to examine our priorities as disciples of Christ.

Both the first reading and the Gospel addresses the issue of jealousy, exclusivity among the faithful people. In the first reading, Joshua brought the issue about Eldad and Medad. If you read the book of numbers, this chapter starts with people complaining about food, Moses cried out to the Lord to reduce his burden and it ends with Aaron and Miriam complaining about Moses. We could see jealousy over authority.

In the Gospel, Jesus' disciples brought a similar issue. Jesus answered them the same way as Moses answered. Jesus shows us that the Spirit of God is not bound by human boundaries, and God can work even through people who we might not expect.

The key question is whether the person's actions reflect God's will. If someone is doing good, if they are promoting God's kingdom, they should be welcomed, not opposed.

We live in a world where division seems to be the norm, where people often draw lines between "us" and "them." But Jesus calls us to transcend these boundaries. We need to be open to the ways that God is at work in others, even those who might not belong to our faith community or share our beliefs.

The perfect example from the Bible is Jonah: Jonah is sent to Nineveh, a non-Israelite city, to call the people to repentance. Despite Jonah's reluctance, God's mercy is extended to the people of Nineveh when they repent. Jonah struggles with this, but God shows that His love and mercy go beyond Israel.

In the New testament we see Jesus approaching the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4: 1-26) the good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37).

As disciples of Jesus, we are challenged to rejoice when we see God's goodness and grace at work in unexpected people and places. Instead of jealousy or exclusion, we should be people of openness, inclusion, and generosity, welcoming all as part of God's great and diverse family.

One thing we should keep in Mind that we are not the owners of Jesus or we don't have exclusive right over Jesus. He belongs to all. The spirit of God free and it can blow it wings where he wants . He belongs to all.

Let us ask ourselves: Are we open to the unexpected ways in which God works? Can we recognize the Spirit of God moving in others, even if they are outside our familiar groups, even if they don't "look" or "act" like we think they should?

Let us pray :