

September 26, 2021
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Num 11:25-29
Ps 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14
Js 5:1-6
Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

ARE YOU OPEN FOR CORRECTION?

Are you open for correction? Do you accept it humbly? On the other hand, **do you correct others lovingly?**

I remember during my formation years in the seminary we had a 'monthly fraternal correction.' We gathered as a group, and we expressed to each other the attitudes/behaviors that need to be changed. The purpose of the session is not to bring the other down. Rather, the goal is to help the other become the best version of himself in following the Lord Jesus. *(I talked to Sr. Gina if they had it in their formation at the convent and she said they have it up to now. They still do it monthly, and they call it as "Review of Life" session.)*

Honestly, it was not an easy session. It was nerve-wracking in the sense that you never know how the other will react to the correction. Thus, in our prayer we always asked the Lord Jesus for courage to correct the other lovingly and the grace of humility to accept the correction humbly.

Why am I talking about correction? In the gospel proclaimed today we heard the 'fraternal correction' made by the Lord Jesus to his disciples. In the story the disciples were not happy seeing another driving out demons in the name of the Lord Jesus. **Why?** It is simply because the man who was doing it was not part of their company. The good the man was doing made them sad rather than cheerful. This reaction was coming from fear – **they were afraid that the man will take away the role given to them.** Yes, they became jealous and suspicious of the man doing good in the name of the Lord Jesus.

How did the Lord Jesus correct them? Listen again to what the Lord 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."** The Lord Jesus was telling his disciples to change their attitudes/behaviors. He was challenging them to rejoice rather than grieve over the good things' others are doing. He was challenging them to be more loving towards others who are not part of their company. **Why?** It is because real 'love does not envy others.' He

was also challenging them to be more welcoming and generous in encouraging others to work in his name.

You see, the 'fraternal correction' made by the Lord Jesus towards his disciples was not meant to bring them down. Instead, he was building them up into his image and likeness. He was forming and transforming them patiently. He was trying to help them become better disciples by removing the negative attitudes of jealousy and exclusivity in them. Ignoring the call to change their ways will only create scandals to others. Hence, faith will not advance, only egos!

What is the invitation of the Lord Jesus for us today? The Lord Jesus is inviting us today to help each other become his best disciples. And one of the ways we can help each other based on the gospel proclaimed, is to employ Christ-like correction when we see attitudes/behaviors contrary to Christ. Let us always bear in mind that when we do it, we must do it lovingly. We must do it with a clear purpose of helping the other become the best version of himself/herself in following the Lord Jesus.

Aside from the courage to correct others lovingly, let us always examine ourselves if jealousy or even envy, resides in our hearts. If it is, then ask the Lord Jesus to remove it. **Why?** It is because it will only make our lives miserable. We will be feeding despondency rather than cheerfulness when we keep it in our hearts.

The call for Christian correction is not a so-so responsibility. We need God's grace to do it well. Thus, let us continue to pray for each other. Let us pray for each other to have the courage to lovingly correct the wrong and the humility to accept the correction.

Today, the Catholic Church in the United States is also celebrating **Priesthood Sunday**. This special day is not only to appreciate the priesthood but also to reflect upon the important role of the priesthood in the life of the Church.

There was a story about an old lady who talked to a nun to share her concern with regard to one of the active volunteers working in the Church. The old lady said, "**Sister, what will happen to the Church when he leaves us? He was doing lots of good things in the parish?**" The nun replied with a smile on her face, "**Yes, he is doing lots of good things and we are grateful to God for that. However, be worried when the priest leaves and we don't have a priest in the parish. Without a priest, there will be no Holy Eucharist!**"

If you love the Holy Eucharist, please promote the vocation to the priesthood to the young men in your family. Support your priests kindly. Pray for your priests regularly. Correct your priests lovingly. Celebrate the Holy Eucharist with your priests frequently. Help your priests to serve humbly.

God bless and stay safe!