

26th Sunday:

“who am I in Jesus’ company? or who am I apart from Jesus?”

Friends, sometimes we have discussions with friends regarding ‘challenging people with gospel values.’ The question is that not all people have the reference point that we do. Many today don’t have Jesus Christ as a reference point. So, they just follow the culture of the time or just follow their own intuition. And so, sometimes it’s good for us to speak up. But the thing we have to ask ourselves is, ‘is this going to be effective, is it worth saying what I am going to say’, or ‘is my argument is substantiated by my own life witness?’

In our first reading today, Joshua is upset that people are prophesying, but Moses their leader is accepting it. Moses accepts this because of two reasons: first is that *he is humble about it*. He has been the one leading and guiding the people, as God had been guiding him. Now all of a sudden there are other people who are prophesying; God’s voice is speaking through them, and Moses is very happy. Now, imagine, if everyone in the community was speaking the voice of God. Well, really as we are all baptized, and by virtue of our baptism, are prophets, and so we are capable of being the voice of God for others. Being Christian, others also can be voice of God for us as well. We can’t say as Christian that we only hold the voice of God.

The other reason Moses is happy is that *God is working through someone else*. Isn’t that a good thing? We never know how God is going to work in the hearts of other people, therefore need to be attentive that God will speak and act through other people.

In today’s gospel we find, someone is casting out demons in the name of Jesus. In other words, a person is doing a good act. We know, it is hard to argue with someone doing good. This person has obviously accepted the name of Jesus, and now using that name to cast out demons. Now Jesus is saying: ‘let them continue, because whoever is not against us, he in with us’. This also presumes that those who are against the Lord are “not with us”.

St. James will compete the same thought when he say, those who stand against the poor and above the poor, need to be separated, - *cut off*- whereas, those who are performing mighty deeds in Jesus's name are with the Lord and his church. In this context, we are prompted to ask two questions to ourselves:

1. Who am I in the company of Jesus'? 2. Who am I apart from Jesus?

For example, who am I when I am tired? Looking into Jesus experience, when Jesus was tired, when he was in his passion and agony, and dying, that was his most saving moment for humanity. So, staying within the company of Jesus means also to embrace the passion as well.

But, apart from Jesus, I am sure, I am a mess. Without him, I don't have peace, I don't have hope. I don't have patience. Because beyond doubt, I need his strength to do what I am called to do and fulfill the mission that is given to me. When I am intentional that I am with the Lord, I have peace, patience and hope.

This affirms us of Jn 15: "apart from me, you can do nothing, so remain in me, and you will be fruitful". -cfr. (parable of vine and branches)
Amen.