



September 29, 2024

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Nm 11:25-29 | Jas 5:1-6 | Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Experience, education, and brainpower give parents wisdom and foresight. They can see the bigger picture and determine, for example, that eating an entire box of cookies will make their child sick - no matter how appetizing the cookies *appear*. God, likewise, has a perspective that is infinitely broader and deeper than our own. This divine perspective is the lens through which we must understand the strong language Jesus uses in today's Gospel. God is a Father who loves us unconditionally and who, like the parent who refuses a child unlimited sweets, knows the harm that sin causes his children in this life and in eternity. "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off." These words, meant to drive home a point for Jesus' disciples, remind us that God desires our good infinitely more than we do, and that this good is ultimately to be united with him for eternity. God *hates* sin in our lives because he *loves* us. If we believe this, no sacrifice will be too great for us as we strive to root out sin, grow in virtue, and follow Jesus with undivided hearts.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Moses' exclamation in the first reading, "Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets!" remind us of the mission, given to us at baptism, to permeate the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ by our words and example. This is what it means for us to be "prophets." But how do we *become* prophets? And how do we accomplish our task effectively? We begin by engaging in the process described above: leaving sin behind at all costs and embracing lives of virtue. As this process brings us closer to God - especially through prayer, but also through works of mercy - we become increasingly capable of seeing as God sees, making judgments according to his wisdom, and ordering the world around us according to his desires. Our words likewise become more powerful in leading others to Christ because they flow from our ever-deepening friendship with him.

REFLECT What corner of your life have you hesitated to give to God? What attitudes or habits have you been reluctant to invite him to transform? Ask him for the courage and perseverance to give these things over to him and, if needed, to bring them to confession. If you allow him, he will draw you closer to himself and you will become a "prophet" for others in the true sense of the word.