

A reading from the book of Numbers.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

The Lord came down in the cloud,
 and took some of the spirit that was on Moses
 and put it on the seventy elders.
 When the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied.
 But they did not do so again.
 Two men remained in the camp,
 one named Eldad, and the other named Medad,
 and the spirit rested on them;
 they were among those registered,
 but they had not gone out to the tent,
 and so they prophesied in the camp.
 A young man ran and told Moses,
 “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”
 Joshua son of Nun,
 the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said,
 “My lord Moses, stop them!”
 But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake?
 Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets,
 and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!”

as in ‘profit’

= Pro-fuh-SIZED

Eldad = EL-dad

Medad = MEE-dad

Nun = NUHN

PAUSE for **THREE** seconds
 then look up at the people
 and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

A reading from the letter of Saint James.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

Come now, you rich people,
weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you.
Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten.
Your gold and silver have rusted,
and their rust will be evidence against you,
and it will eat your flesh like fire.
You have laid up treasure for the last days.
Listen!
The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields,
which you kept back by fraud, cry out,
and the cries of the harvesters
have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.
You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure;
you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.
You have condemned and murdered the righteous one,
who does not resist you.

Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – 26 B

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After Jesus had finished teaching the disciples,
John said to him,
“Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name,
and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”
But Jesus said, “Do not stop him;
for no one who does a deed of power in my name
will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.
Whoever is not against us is for us.
For truly I tell you,
whoever gives you a cup of water to drink
because you bear the name of Christ
will by no means lose the reward.
If any of you put a stumbling block
before one of these little ones who believe in me,
it would be better for you
if a great millstone were hung around your neck
and you were thrown into the sea.
If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off;
it is better for you to enter life maimed
than to have two hands and to go to hell,
to the unquenchable fire.
And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off;
it is better for you to enter life lame
than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell.
And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out;
it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye
than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell,
where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Numbers 11:25-29

This is a somewhat confused story. Moses had appointed seventy elders to assist him in governing the people in the wilderness. The elders were given a share in some of the “spirit” of Moses to assist them. This resulted in a temporary manifestation of charismatic prophecy among the seventy elders.

After it ceased, two men, Eldad and Medad, received a belated illapse of the spirit and likewise engaged in charismatic prophecy. (This is the confusing part.) It appears that Eldad and Medad were not members of the group of seventy elders, that is, not in the legitimate succession.

An overzealous young man urged Moses to stop them from exercising an unauthorized ministry but Moses refused—the Spirit cannot be confined to regularly appointed offices. Its freedom to blow where it wills is a pointer to the day when the whole people of God will prophesy—an aspiration that Christian faith can see fulfilled at Pentecost.

The caption does not adequately express the reason for the choice of this reading. The question is not “Who decrees that all may prophesy?” but “Does God confine the gift of his Spirit to authorized channels?” That is the question raised in today’s Gospel.

Responsorial Psalm: 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14

Although this psalm is used on other occasions (the Easter Vigil and the third Sunday of the year in series C), this is the only place in our Sunday series where this very fine prayer that we may be cleansed of our secret faults, especially the sin of pride, occurs. (I remember being told by the conductor of my pre-ordination retreat that this prayer should constantly be on the lips of a priest.)

Its relation to the Old Testament reading is not immediately apparent, but perhaps if Moses had used his authority to stop unauthorized charismatics, it would have been an expression of the sin of clerical pride and a misuse of clerical power!

Reading II: James 5:1-6

This exhortation, the tenth in the series in the Letter of James, is allegedly based on the name of Asher (Gen 49:20). It is a warning to the rich against exploiting their employees.

Like the selection for the twenty-third Sunday, this is one of the few New Testament passages that shows concern for social justice (the reasons for this comparative silence were indicated in our comments on the twenty-third Sunday).

Again, the author is careful to provide a theological basis for his social ethic: the cry of the exploited has “reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.” The divine title deliberately recalls the Old Testament prophets and their social teaching.

Gospel: Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

[Note: The apparent omission of verses 44 and 46 is due to the fact that these verses are mere repetitions of verse 48 and do not appear in the earliest and best manuscripts.]

This passage combines two different traditions. The first is the pericope about the strange exorcist; the second, a series of warnings against offenses, which appear in a different context in Q (Luke 17:1-2), and in yet another context in the Matthean redaction of Q (Matt 5:29-30).

Mark’s arrangement has the effect of making the sayings against offenses a comment on the episode of the strange exorcist. To forbid the exorcist would be to cause one of these little ones to stumble, an effect to be avoided at all costs.

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