



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Deacon Terry Ellerman
September 30, 2018 Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I Numbers 11:25-29

Psalm 19:8-14

Reading II James 5:1-6

Gospel Mark 9:38-48

Homily

How many of you have ever been to a birthday party as a child? It is interesting to watch, isn't it? You watch them get their beautiful present, they open it up and look at it and play with it. One of the things that goes on in the mind of parents and grandparents, and they ask: "Will they share that toy with someone else, or, will the child look at the present and say, 'It's mine.' "

Do we not do the same thing sometimes? And yet we realize that all gifts come from God? In our readings today the message is really about sharing. In our first reading from the book of Numbers we see that Moses calls the seventy elders together in the tent and God come down and distributes his Spirit among them. But two of the elders were not there, Eldad and Medad. And they also received the Spirit. But there was a snitch somewhere who reported Eldad and Medad were not present at the tent meeting. And Joshua said to Moses, "Stop them. Don't let them prophesize? They weren't in the tent with us?"

But Moses told Joshua that it was OK.

Then in the Gospel of Mark someone said, "There's someone out there casting out demons in your name, and he's not with us." And Jesus smiles and says, "So what? If he's casting out demons in my name—that's a good thing."

Aren't we sometimes the same way? We all have gifts that God has given us and he expects us to use them for the good of all, not to keep within us and not to share. Sometimes we become so territorial we think everything belongs to us, and we shouldn't. And we should share.

That is really what stewardship is about. Stewardship is the gifts we have from God. God gave them to us—not to keep, but to use for the benefit of the community and the world.

Then we look at the Second Reading from James, and he talks very critically about the rich. But what he really is talking about is money—and our not being willing to use it fairly. And he talks about the rich person who is not giving a just wage, and people not using their gifts in the way God wants them to use them.

And then in the Gospel Jesus says to us, “You better be sure that we have our eyes fixed on Heaven. You better be sure we have our eyes fixed on what is important because if not, we may not get into Heaven and instead will be thrown into Gehenna where the ‘worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’ “ Think about that for a minute.

He says we need to look at our environment, and look at the people we hang out with. We need to look at what we do and if there are some people who are causing us harm, and if so, we need to do something about it. Then in the Gospel Jesus says, “If your eye is causing you to sin, then pluck it out.” And, “If your hand is causing you to sin, then cut it off.” Now, does Jesus really want us to do that? No. But he is saying to us, “Figure out what is really important. And keep the end in mind, and the end in mind is Heaven.” The end in mind is doing what we need to do in this world so we will be helping others and thus be happier—and then we will meet in Heaven.

So, the question we ask ourselves this morning is: “What are the gifts that God has given each and everyone one?” And as part of that it is important to realize that you are giving, and you are giving, and you are giving—and each one of your gifts will be different.” The point is that we want God to be present in our lives, and we need to use our gifts for the purpose of helping one another.

We need to use our gifts to help one another. If not, we miss the point. So this morning we ask ourselves this question: “Are we sharing with one another?”

Terry Ellerman is a retired educator and serves as a deacon at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Quincy, Illinois. (Third TASCAM Recorder DR40 file 4)