

## Homily 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B 2024

Most of us recognise that we have both an inner persona that we keep fairly hidden and an outer persona, what other people see. However, it is our inner persona, our inner-self that shapes what we reveal of ourselves to others. In order to help our inner-selves nurture our outer-selves better, Jesus suggests that we spend quality time in quiet each day. This will help us be ready to give a cup of water to someone who is thirsty, be alert to the presence of the Spirit within others and respect them for it including those we find difficult to like: in other words, be compassionate.

Given the terrible wars, abuse of power, disharmony and unrest in the world, what the world needs more than anything today is heart-felt compassion.

We will be better able to comfort the world — and it will be comforted — *when we show it that God sees the world's heart with the eyes of the heart that God feels for it. This means that God sees the goodness and love at the heart of the world in a way that is far, far above the way the world sees its own heart. God never feels frightened by the assertions of human freedom, God always opens another door when we close one; God is not put off by all the times we are too weak to do what is best; God understands our complexity, our weaknesses, our anger, our lusts, our jealousies, and our despair, yet God never stops loving us even when we put ourselves in hell; and God descends into all the hells we create, stands inside our muddled, wounded, and guilty hearts and breathes out peace.* Ronald Rolheiser.

In believing that God shows each of us this kind of compassion and gifts it into our lives, God will reveal his compassion to all those whom we encounter through us.

The burning question raised by today's gospel is whether Jesus was exaggerating when he urged his followers to use drastic measures to avoid evil and its harmful consequences (Mark 9:42-47)? Jesus gave us one supreme goal in life: to ask ourselves *what is worth any sacrifice?* Our response is that our goal is God and God's will for our lives knowing that this is the way that will lead us to everlasting peace and happiness. To do this, we must be ready to part with anything that causes us to sin and which leads to spiritual death.

Jesus warns his disciples and us of our responsibility not to be a stumbling block for others. This means not giving offense or bad example that might lead another to sin. The Jews held that it was an unforgivable sin to teach another to sin. If we teach another to sin, he or she in turn may teach still another to do the same, thus setting in motion a sequence of sin that has no foreseeable end. Those who are young in faith are especially vulnerable to the bad example of those who should be good examples of living the faith.

So, ask yourself, do you set a good example for others to follow, especially the young???

**There was a painter named Jack** who was very keen to save money wherever he could in his work. So, he would often thin down his paint to make it go that wee bit further. As it happened, he succeeded at doing this for some time.

Eventually, the local church decided to have a big restoration project. Jack put in a painting bid and, because his price was so competitive, he was awarded the job.

So, he erected the trestles, put up the planks, and bought the paint which he then thinned down with turpentine.

Jack was on the scaffolding painting away and the job was nearly finished when suddenly there was a horrendous clap of thunder. The sky opened and the rain poured down, washing the thin paint from the walls all over the church and knocking Jack off the scaffolding onto the lawn.

Jack was no fool. He knew this was a judgment from the Almighty, so he fell on his knees and cried out, **"Oh, God! Forgive me! What should I do?"**

And from the thunder, a mighty Voice spoke, **"Repaint! Repaint! And thin no more!"**