

## **Self-centeredness as an Obstacle to Christian Living.**

In the Eucharist, we celebrate Christ's total self-giving and selflessness. One of the themes the readings today invite us to reflect on. In the first reading, God asked Moses to assemble seventy elders to receive God's spirit and assist Moses in leading the people. When the elders gathered, the spirit of God came and rested on them, and they prophesied. At the same time, two men Eldad and Medad, who were not in the camp, received the same spirit and prophesied too. A young man reported the strange thing to Moses to the hearing of Joshua. Joshua wanted Moses to stop him, but Moses wished is for all to receive God's spirit. Thus, we see in Moses one who wants others to share in the gifts God has given to him.

Similarly, in the gospel, the disciples reported to Jesus how they wanted to prevent someone from driving out demons because he was not among them. Jesus, who came to share God's love to all, demanded that they don't stop anybody because God's love and gifts are abundant to those who love and trust him. These two events invite us to reflect on how we appreciate and open our hearts to welcome the gifts others have and the good deeds others do. Are we self-centered to think that if we cannot do it, nobody can?

Jesus equally presents to us other striking messages in the remaining part of the gospel. First, Jesus warns on the danger of scandal: misleading others. The life we live speaks so much than what we say. Action speaks louder than voice, and example is better than precepts. At the end of each Mass, we are commissioned to go and be witnesses of the gospel by our words and deeds. Our life may be the only bible another person may read. Being true witnesses shows in the way we are patient with one another, tolerating, understanding, and forgiving others for the sake of Christ.

Finally, Jesus invites us to ask ourselves what is it that leads us to sin? Many things can lead us to sin. For example, St. James presents to us in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading today the danger of selfishness that shows itself when we maltreat the poor and the less privileged. In all these, we discover that the central message is to watch our ego-self. Let us ask the good Lord that these messages about living beyond oneself will always manifest in our lives. Amen.