

## **Homily for 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B      Fr. Michael Gathuku.**

Today Gospel reading has two parts, the first part is about tolerance, Jealousy and rivalry, Jesus instructed his disciple to tolerate those other, those who are on a different path provided the path they are on, is not against the Gospel, "whoever is not against us is for us". In Christianity, which is equally true in the secular world, we depend on others throughout our lives, on the presence of others we are validated, have our identity and reality. Therefore, as Christian we should tolerate and respect truth, that which is always larger than us; we should appreciate charity that thrives beyond borders.

The second part of today Gospel is a continuation of the theme we have been hearing for the last three weeks on the cause of discipleship. What length can we go to be

ruly committed to the cause of Gospel message. The cause of following Jesus sometimes calls for the ultimate sacrifice

The movie "A man for all season" is based on the life of St. Thomas more. Thomas more was a teenage in England when Columbus discovered America. Thomas attended Oxford University and after graduation, entered public life. He rose rapidly as government official. In 1529, King Henry vii honored him by appointing him chancellor of England

Then tragedy struck Thomas Mores life, when he refused to consent to King Henry's unlawful remarrying after divorcing his queen. Henry had passed a word along to the dignitaries that if they refuse to sign the document, they would be arrested for treason. Thomas More refused to sign, he said he wouldn't swear to something that he knew in his heart was wrong. He was arrested and in July 6<sup>th</sup> 1535, he was executed for treason.

Thomas More's story illustrates what Jesus meant when he said 'if your hand makes you sin cut it off, it is better for you to enter into life crippled, than to have two hands and go to hell. He continues to say that "if your foot causes you to sin cut it off, for it is better to enter to eternal life lame than to go to hell with two feet'. The same with your eye, it shouldn't be the cause of failing in your commitment.

Jesus isn't telling us to cut off a leg or pluck out our eyes in literal sense; no what he simply means is we should be willing to sacrifice whatever is necessary to keep from sinning. We should sacrifice even the most precious of them for the sake of the kingdom. Thomas More sacrificed his life instead of bending to what his heart knew was wrong.

Back to the issue of rivalry and Jealousy, the world is worst the way it is because of rivalry and jealousy. Some of the worst sins in the world can be attributed to Jealousy. Do you recall last Sunday second reading? James in last week second reading had asked a question, namely where do wars and battles between people come from? He said it is because of distorted desires; you want something, and you haven't got it, so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy, so you fight to get your way by force.

Right from the creation we see these playing out, in Genesis, Cain killed his brother Abel because his offering was accepted by God and his was not. In today's first reading Joshua is jealous of Eldad and Medad prophesying. The Jews of Antioch in Pisidia persecuted Paul and Barnabas because of jealousy.

In the Gospel today the disciples are jealous of a stranger expelling demons. Jealousy can be a horrible thing for us humans, sometimes it can turn fatal. Shakespeare said the following about jealousy" it is the green-eyed monster, which does mock the meat it feeds on"

We are living in a pluralistic society; thus, we should learn to co-exist without rivalry and jealousy, this world is full of everything, and our creator know's how to share with everyone, let us appreciate what God has given us and respect other people and their share. This is a lesson we should learn today, both for the benefit of the society and the universe.

Tolerance is a profound respect for the freedom of God to move in his chosen ways, time and pace, it is humility before the greatness of God and acknowledging that God is the source of everything we have. What do we have that is not from God? And if everything is from God, why are we jealous of God's generosity to others.

God risks His hope on us, why then should we constrain his hope for others.