

## 26'th Sunday - B

Today's readings give us a strong warning against jealousy, intolerance and giving scandal. In the first reading, we find jealousy, in its destructive form of envy, raising its ugly head in Moses' assistant and successor, Joshua. Moses and seventy future helpers were called by the Lord God to the Tent of Meeting for the Spirit-giving ordination ceremony. But two of the invitees were absent, and Joshua could not tolerate these absent men prophesying in the camp without receiving God's Spirit in the Tent of Meeting. Moses had to instruct Joshua to be tolerant. Baptism commits every Christian to work for social justice through peaceable, rather than violent, means. In the Gospel, we find intolerance among the apostles of Christ. John complains to Jesus that a man outside their group of selected disciples has been exorcising demons in Jesus' Name, in spite of their attempt to prevent him from doing so. Jesus responds by giving the Apostles lessons in Jesus' own kind of tolerance and in the reward to be given to outsiders for good deeds they do for the disciples of Jesus because they are serving Jesus. We also hear the strong warning of Jesus against giving scandal, especially to innocent children, vulnerable members of the community, and beginners in the Faith. Jesus instructs the Apostles, and us, that, just as a doctor might remove a limb or some part of the body in order to preserve the life of the whole body, so we must be ready to part with anything that causes us or others to sin and which leads to spiritual death. Jesus is inviting us to integrate our bodies into our following of Christ, so that our hands become instruments of compassion, healing and comfort, our feet help us to bring the Gospel to the world and our eyes learn to see the truth, goodness and beauty all around us.