

# Leaders Formed by the Lord

## I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

### FIRST READING (Nm 11: 25-29)

<sup>25</sup>The LORD then came down in the cloud and spoke to him. Taking some of the spirit that was on Moses, he bestowed it on the seventy elders; and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied\* but did not continue.<sup>26</sup>Now two men, one named Eldad and the other Medad, had remained in the camp, yet the spirit came to rest on them also. They too had been on the list, but had not gone out to the tent; and so they **prophesied** in the camp. <sup>27</sup>So, when a young man ran and reported to Moses, “Eldad and Medad are **prophesying** in the camp,” <sup>28</sup>Joshua, son of Nun, who from his youth had been Moses’ aide, said, “My lord, Moses, stop them.” <sup>29</sup>But Moses answered him, “Are you jealous for my sake? If only all the people of the LORD were **prophets!** If only the LORD would bestow his spirit on them!”

**THE FOCUS: Prophecy**

### COMMENTARY

- Prophecy in the Old Testament evolved from the priestly functions, but it does not follow strictly the law of lineage that Priests follow. Only from the tribe of Levi do priests come whereas other prophets may be anointed by God.
- They serve as mouth pieces of God.
- In v. 25, what is being bestowed upon the 70 elders? The Spirit. The anointing is the Spirit’s work.
- But v. 26 says there were two men who were not present in the gathering, yet the spirit went upon them and they prophesied. Was that unusual. Indeed it was for Joshua.
- So that in vv. 27-28, what does Joshua want to happen? To stop the service of the two men.
- And what is the word of Moses on this unusual thing that happens?



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**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14)  
**THE PRECEPTS OF THE LORD  
GIVE JOY TO THE HEART.**

### SECOND READING (Jas 5:1-6)

<sup>1\*</sup> “Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending **miseries**.

**Miseries enumerated:**

<sup>2b</sup>Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, <sup>3c</sup>your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you; it will devour your flesh like a fire. You have stored up treasure for the last days.

**Criminal activities of the rich:**

<sup>4d</sup>Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. <sup>5e</sup>You have lived on earth in luxury and pleasure; you have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter. <sup>6f</sup>You have condemned; you have murdered the righteous one; he offers you no resistance.\*

**THE FOCUS: Miseries of the Rich**

### COMMENTARY

- The letter of James is a pastoral letter that has a bias against the rich who are not sensitive to the situation of the poor.

- So in our text, the rich is the object of the speaker's ire and grievance. So the rich is brought to the court.
- Vv 2-3 enumerate the miseries of the rich. What are these: what will happen to their wealth?
- Vv.4-6 enumerate these injustices done to the poor.

It is not a joke. It is a grave offense in the gospel to lead others/oneself to sin.

Our relationships in the community must be characterized by respect. We join the community (church) in order to be holy, to get support, so that we will not sin again, so that we will be helped in our search for God.

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## GOSPEL READING (Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48)

### *Welcoming those who don't belong*

<sup>38\*</sup> John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." <sup>39</sup> Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. <sup>40m</sup> For whoever is not against us is for us. <sup>41n</sup> Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward

### *Avoid scandals*

<sup>42o</sup> "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe [in me] to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup> If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna,\* into the unquenchable fire. <sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. <sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, <sup>48p</sup> where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'

### THE FOCUS: On Avoiding Scandals

## COMMENTARY

In what way is the story in vv. 38-40 similar to that of the First Reading. In what way is it different?

On avoiding scandals, the author (or Jesus) uses exaggerations.

In practice, the Church has not taken vv.42-43, 45, 47-48 literally. But these verses should be enough to warn us of the gravity of act of leading others and oneself to sin.

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## II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

In the First Reading, Moses does not see that the prophesying of Eldad and Meldad was a stumbling block. The attitude of Joshua is. The Second Reading extols the leaders to be sensitive to the need of the poor rather than to take advantage of their being marginalized. And the Gospel exhorts leaders not be the cause of scandal of those who are still weak in faith, those who are still new in the church.

### Points to include in your homily/sharing

Cite an activity of the church that tries to exclude others rather than integrate the different social classes in our parish. Why do some do these?

Does this kind of mentality unite or divide the parish?

What then is demanded of us?

Concretely narrate your own breakthrough why you are still in the parish no matter how lowly it is for others. End it with the idea that in the Eucharist, at least for an hour or more, we relate as borderless: people, code, color, class, sex do not matter.

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## III. OUR CONTEXT

1. This Sunday is National Seafarer's Day. Personally, any significant reason for you?

2. September 30 is also the Feast Day of St Jerome, the famous bible scholar saint who translated the Septuagint (Greek Bible) to Vulgate (Latin) in Jerusalem, thus also considered the Hebrew background of the texts.

-Prepared by Bro. Hansel B. Mapayo, SSP