

JULY 1, 2018



THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



WISDOM 1:13-15, 2:23-24

PSALM 38:2, 4, 5-6, 11, 12, 13

2 CORINTHIANS 8:7, 9, 13-15

MARK 5:21-43

REFLECTION

The First Reading this week tells us that the Devil brought death into the world out of envy. Envy is something that we don't often talk about in modern society. Envy is the feeling of resentment we have for others because they have something that we want. It could be a possession, but it also could be a personal characteristic or circumstance. When I was in high school one of my classmates had a red convertible Mustang. It was a hot car. I was very envious because I really wished I had this car.

Envy is most dangerous when it leads us to put others down. We do this because we are resentful of those who have what we want. We are more focused on their blessings than our own. I didn't really know my classmate with the Mustang well, but I concluded that he was stuck-up and I frequently passed on this gossip to others. My only reason for this was that he had a hot red Mustang car, and I did not. Sometimes envy leads us to take hurtful actions in order to bring others down. I remember doing that in grade school. If I saw a classmate talented at basketball, I consoled myself by pointing out that my test grades were better, and that he was just a dumb jock. With time, I recognized that nobody is the best at everything. I realized that there is nothing wrong with having friends who are smarter or more talented than I am. That realization, though challenging, helped me grow. I became a better friend who put others down less, and I opened myself to learn from my classmates. I also grew to recognize and appreciate my own talents because of this.

I find this to be similar to the Christians described in today's Second Reading who were instructed to share with one another when they had abundance, so that none would ever go wanting. Our Christian faith offers us tools to avoid envy: tools such as humility, gratitude, and self-giving.

ACTION

Here is a three-part challenge. The next time you might be tempted to gossip or bring a classmate down, stop and ask yourself: Is envy at the root of this? Then simply thank God for the gifts granted to this person. Acknowledge God's magnificent work. Finally, one more challenge: acknowledge God's magnificent work in you.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- What sort of blessings do you envy in other people's lives? Why do you care so much about those particular things? What blessings are in your own life?