

10th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; Cycle- B; June 9th 2024
Genesis 3:9-15; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3: 20-35

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The scribes and Pharisees used different tactics to silence Jesus and even to trap him in his words. Sometimes certain questions they asked Jesus were so tricky as no ordinary person could come out of it. Finally as they failed to trap Jesus in words, they used the worst crime or evil against Jesus which was **the slander**. What is slander? It is nothing but spreading intentionally the false statement against a person's reputation and integrity. The statement may not have any truth in it. It is worse than gossip. For gossip may have some truth in it. We are very familiar with this evil especially during the election time. Our nation is getting ready for another major election and the candidates already started throwing mud against each other. This is what the Jews did against Jesus. Jesus was the only person who could cast out the demons which really surprised even his enemies. Then they started accusing him of casting out the demons with the help of Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Jesus right away retorted them and exposed their irrationality. **He asks, "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand."** No doubt, the Satan will never destroy the effort of his associates. If he does, it is suicidal.

Of course, the scribes and Pharisees could mislead the people to a great extent. If we read the last part of today's gospel we come to know that even the mother and family members of Jesus were carried away by this false accusation against him. They thought that Jesus was going out of mind. That is why his mother and cousins came to see him. They didn't come for a courtesy visit; rather to restrain him and take him back home. That is the reason Jesus didn't even come out of the house.

In the modern age we are very familiar with the evils of prejudice, slander and gossip, running among people. **It is said, "The great minds discuss ideas; the average minds discuss events and the mean minds discuss people."** Yes, the third category of people is the curse in the growth of the society. They discuss, mainly the shortcomings of the people with exaggerations and are least interested in the good deeds of people. They misinterpret even the good actions of people. When somebody has got enmity with another, even he/she may go with slander, with the intention to silence the enemy.

Unfortunately, sometimes you and I fall into this third category of people whose interest is to discuss the shortcomings of people. Just make a self examination and see when you come in a group what the subject matter of your talk is. Very often it is people and their failures. If some people point out the good deeds of so and so, many don't show

much interest in them at all. Some even try to belittle the good deeds. As soon as they hear someone commenting on the failure of a person, immediately all the ears become keen and attentive. We are very quick to condemn others and less enthusiastic to appreciate people for their good deeds. The tragic outcome of slander and gossip is that they kill many initiatives and good works of generous people. With one uncharitable comment we can totally make a person inactive.

We all need to develop a good attitude of appreciating the good works of people. No matter, who did them. Only with encouraging words and appreciation the new initiatives can bud and bloom. Sometimes, our judgment on the actions and behavior of people need not be true either. Perhaps we too have realized later how our opinions and judgment went wrong. We human beings see only the externals or the appearances of something. We are unable to go deeper than that and reach the innermost heart of a person. Very often we fail to understand the reason behind of a man's action. That is what God said to Prophet Samuel who judged the first son of Jesse to be worthy of the next king. God said to Samuel, **“Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart” (1Sam 16:7)**. Yes, only God who knows even the innermost thought of a person can judge someone.

When I fail in something I still look for a little bit sympathy and encouragement instead of destructive criticism. If so, first I should be ready to give the same to my brothers and sisters. Let us develop the virtue of appreciating people when they do something good and let us be prompt in forgiving when they have failed in their attempt. Even if we fail to say good things about others, at least, we can abstain from speaking ill of people. Please remember the words of Jesus in Mat. 7:1-3, **“Stop judging so that you may not be judge. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye?”** Remember, we are all human beings and not angels. We all fail and make mistakes in different ways. Today they fall; but tomorrow I will fall. What we need is positive correction and encouragement. If we have good things for our sisters and brothers, they have the same things for us.