

## ***Cycle B - Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Sept. 29, 2024***

“Whoever is not against us is for us...”

*(All Three Readings)*

### **OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 19)**

Leader: The law of the Lord is perfect,  
Reviving the soul;

**All: The decrees of the Lord are sure,  
Making wise the simple.**

Leader: The fear of the Lord is pure,  
Enduring forever;

**All: The ordinances of the Lord are true  
And righteous altogether.  
Amen.**

### **First Reading – Numbers 11:16-17, 25-29**

In response to Moses’ complaining to the Lord about the difficulty in providing for God’s people, the Lord decides to distribute Moses’ charismatic spirit to 70 other elders of the community. A dispute arises about the two who were not there and yet prophesied. There was struggle and disagreement between those who desired greater institutional control over the prophetic spirit and those who want greater openness. Today’s narrative in Numbers (paralleling a similar dispute in today’s Gospel) clearly opposes limiting the action of the Spirit, which is a free gift of God.

1. How has God responded to your bouts of complaining about life?
2. How do you experience God’s Spirit of grace and mercy in non-Christians?

### **Second Reading – James 5:1-6**

Consistent with a long tradition within Israel of prophets condemning the exploitation of the poor, James’ words again draw a sharp contrast between the rich and the poor, emphasizing the injustice inflicted by the former on the latter. Stored riches and treasures only lead to personal deterioration and point to the final tribulation, according to James.

1. Why, in your opinion, does James keep coming back to the same theme of rich and poor?
2. What is so sinful and destructive about amassing riches?

### **Gospel Reading – Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48**

The call to service is broad and vast. It is intended for all of God’s people and Jesus challenges us not to so quickly judge the works of service by others. Later in the Gospel Jesus encourages us to examine the impairments in our own life that prohibit us from experiencing God’s love in its fullness.

1. Does anything shock you in this reading?
2. In what ways do we tempt others into sin rather than showing them God’s love?
3. Where is there division between ministries or among people in our parishes? How can we build bridges to unity?

## **LIVING THE WORD**

What aspect of God's Word is challenging me this coming week, perhaps a word or phrase?

## **PRAYING THE WORD**

**Intercession:** We pray for true unity within the Catholic Church, a unity that respects and honors all who serve. In the midst of many different charisms, gifts and callings, may God our Father seal us in one Spirit through Jesus Christ. We pray to the Lord....

*(Invite personal intentions, ending with "Our Father ...")*

### **Closing Prayer:**

Leader: Free like the wind the Spirit blows, unpredictable.

**All: From your strongholds  
The Spirit carries the name of Jesus Christ,**

Leader: Do not quench the fire just ignited:  
It must set the world ablaze.

**All: Strive for faithfulness and perseverance  
And God will be our salvation and glory  
Amen.**

Leader: Let us share with one another the peace of the risen Christ,  
a peace the world cannot give.