



**Twenty-sixth Sunday Autumn Ordinary time. September 29, 2024**

**Numbers 11:25-29; Psalm 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14; James 5:1-6; Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48**

**Homily, Fr. Ed Hislop**

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A moment ago, we heard the words from the Book of Numbers: *“The Lord came down in a cloud and spoke...”*

One might expect more clarity, something clear cut and simple to grasp. Sometimes everything we are about or must accomplish, or at least attempt, seems to be somewhat cloudy and unclear.

Perhaps that is the time we can be assured that it is God calling, speaking, or pleading. Maybe God is taking some of the Spirit that is upon and within us and “passing it around...” like he did on those “elders.”

Maybe the “spirit” taken from us and being passed to others is the “spirit” of all we have done and are doing as people of faith, *“loving tenderly”* and *“walking humbly”* in the midst of family, world, city, countryside, work, and neighborhood.

Or maybe it is a sign of all we have had set before us; or maybe, the *“Spirit has come to rest upon us”* during these days, as we wonder, *“will our sacrifices please you, what should we bring today?”*

It is a spirit of learning again how to “open doors,” to those like Eldad and Medad, who while *“outside the gathering”* were still given the gift of the spirit to prophesy. And still, like so many on the outside today, those on the “inside” still try to stop them, to silence them, to close the doors of the gathering to them, because, perhaps, their “prophecy,” their living, hopes and visions are too much to bear for some. But Moses words echo through such exclusion: *“Are you jealous?” “Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all.”*

Our story, the story of the Church in this age and in this place must become a story of breaking

down the walls and opening the doors, the story of *a sacrifice that pleases God!*

What will you, I, we do to become a closer friend of Christ, to be the hands, eyes, heart and ears of Christ in this place, in this time? How will we open doors and break down the walls? How will we *“love tenderly?”*

Listen with new ears and a trusting heart to Christ: **“Let go!”** Let go of “preventing others” from doing the deeds of Christ *“because they do not belong to us!”* “Let go” and let the Spirit “rest upon us and them.” “Let go” of the hands that grasp, hold on tight; “let go” of the clenched fist; “let go” of the feet that will only stand still; “let go” of eyes that will not see beyond their own need and will not see beyond the gathering to those left out, or will not try to look beyond the clouds.

How will we break down the walls? *“Cut it off and pluck it out!”* “Cut off” the things that keep us from growth—from giving, seeing, moving, loving and “wanting to build walls.” *“Pluck out”* judgements and condemnations, before we wake up someday, as the Gospel reminds us, finding ourselves encircled by an insurmountable wall, up to our necks in garbage—garbage of our own making, in a new “Gehenna” (*which was the name of Jerusalem’s city dump*), “where,” Jesus says, *“the worm does not die, and the fire always burns!”* The garbage of exclusion, selfishness, judgement, self-righteousness, and fear.

In a moment we will pray as part of the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, words which will take *“some of the spirit and bestow it on us”* as we find ourselves in the clouds of God’s doing and begin these autumn days of “letting go,” seeing anew, and

walking to the threshold of a new parish year. To these words we will sing "Amen, Amen, Amen!" (An ancient word which means, "I stake my life on this!") "...grant that through the power of your Spirit of love we may be counted now and until the day of eternity among the members of your Son in whose body and blood we have communion..."

These are the beginning days of wondrous opportunity! Days to both give and receive a cup of water to drink, because we all belong to Christ. "Days to weep with those who weep; to hold light in the night-time of fear, and share joy and



sorrow till we've seen the journey through." May we all come out of the clouds, give our spirit... and receive spirit! Open our hands, see with new eyes and walk, no, run with new feet! Now our hands, eyes and feet are Christ's, so touch, see and run for "**behold, he makes all things new!**"

**Here in the clouds of these days he speaks:**  
**"Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all."** How? "**act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God.**"

