



Father Joseph Samaan's Outline for the 10th Sunday of Matthew

Matthew 17:14-23 - Sunday 08/24/2008

“Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, ‘Why couldn’t we drive it out?’ He replied, ‘Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.’” (Matthew 17:19-21)

Where do we find other events in the Scriptures with similar settings?

- Old Testament Book of Exodus
 - The Prophet Moses went up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments, leaving Aaron his brother and the other leaders to care for the people during his absence.
 - Aaron and the others gave in to the pressure of the people and allowed them to make themselves a golden calf and worship it instead of God.
 - Moses returned and reprimanded both the leaders and the people.
 - “When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, ‘Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’” (Exodus 32:1)

Comparison to today’s reading

- Jesus was away for days on the mountain, leaving His disciples alone.
- The disciples were unable to cast out the demon. Jesus returned and it cast out.
- Jesus reprimands the weak faith of the father, and then He explains to His disciples that because of their weak faith, they could not cast out the demon.

Points to Ponder

- The father’s request to heal his boy came while Jesus was absent during His trip to the mountain along with Peter, James, and John, who witnessed His transfiguration during that trip.
- When Jesus was away, His disciples were in a vulnerable position. They had to face the challenges and requests for help from people by themselves.
- The people who made requests for help from the disciples did not necessarily believe themselves that the disciples could meet their requests.
- Jesus did not blame the disciples alone for their lack of faith; He blamed the father of the boy even more.

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- Through this miracle, Jesus Christ teaches us that the unbelief of those who await results from God or His Church can hinder them from receiving their own requests.

What is the significance of this miracle and its relevance to our life?

The significance of this incident shows us among many things two important issues:

1. It shows how powerful the name of Jesus is and how fearful His presence is, especially to the demons.
2. It underlines the importance of a parent's duty toward their children to bring them to Christ for healing, as well as the responsibility of the Church toward children to bring them up in a Christ-centered environment.

What are some of the practical applications learned from this miracle?

- This incident shows the importance of exposing the entire family to the life in Christ, especially the children. This happens first and foremost through the example of the parents themselves, their faith, and their commitment in Christ.
- Many times parents are very busy or preoccupied, and thus they depend on others to accomplish this important task. In this way, they cannot monitor the quality of their children's upbringing in Christ, and do not become role models to their children through their own example.
- Parents may be distracted by encouraging their children in other areas such as sport, arts, etc., while they give less emphasis and priority to strengthening their children's bonds with Christ.
- If and when parents realize the defect in their children's upbringing in Christ, it is often too late for them to do much to correct the situation.
- Many times -mistakenly- the clergy of the Church, Church programs, and schools focus more on social activities, through them trying to attract people/children to Church, rather than focusing on satisfying the inner hunger of people or addressing the real inner spiritual needs that they have.

Solutions

Parents should immerse their children in Christ from the stage of infancy by developing a lifestyle, where children grow up accustomed to the life in Christ, rather than to try to bring them to Christ only when it is too late.

Parents, clergy, and Church programs alike need to realize the importance of a Christ-centered approach in the life of children and how powerful He can be in healing our problems. Therefore, much of the church educational structure and spiritual programs need continuous revision to maintain their Christ-centered character and to adapt to the needs of each generation, in order to continue to satisfy the hunger for Christ that all people have.

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Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, as we fight against many demons that try to destroy us, we come to You, seeking healing for our souls and bodies. Heal us, O Lord. You are our true Physician. Bring us under Your loving wings. Help us, O Lord, to realize how important You are to our lives and to the lives of our children. Grant our community, and all those who are in need of Your salvation, the blessing to come to You and to enjoy Your sweetness and that of Your merciful Father and Your all-compassionate Holy Spirit. Amen.

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