

Reflection on Mark 9:38-50

This Gospel begins with John saying to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw a person who was driving out demons. We tried to stop him because he does not follow us." Are the disciples a bit jealous of this person's ability to drive out demons? Do they want to have this kind of power? Jesus says to John, "Do not prevent him. If someone performs a good deed in my name, then who can speak ill of me?" Then Jesus adds: "Whoever is not against us is for us."

Today Jesus is giving us an important instruction. He is telling us that anyone who is not against us is for us. Typically most human beings know which individuals support them. However, we also know which people may struggle with us, dislike us, or ignore us. We may allow these individuals to disrupt our internal peace and harmony. As human beings, many of us may care too much about what others think of us. Jesus, however, wants his disciples to be truly free. He does not want them to be jealous of others or to covet another's abilities and gifts.

Jesus clearly wants his disciples to appreciate their own gifts and gifts of others as well. Life is not a competition, yet many of us live as if it were. Today if you find yourself being critical of another person's actions, words, and being, STOP! Take a moment, breathe, and then change your reactive thoughts and your judgment. You may find that you feel more peaceful, relaxed, and calm. Judgment poisons our minds and our hearts. Release your judgment and relax and be at peace!