

26<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time  
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Growing up I often felt excluded from what my sisters were doing, and for good reasons...they were 9, 12 and 14 years older than me.

Think about the times you have been excluded, but in far more painful situations.

Exclusion means someone is rejected while another is accepted, or someone in a place of power decides who is in and who is out.

In our reading, Moses takes 70 people with him to the meeting tent and God's Spirit comes and rest upon them. They start prophesying. Some of the 70 get wind that there are two others who weren't with the group who are also prophesying. They run to Moses to have him stop them. But Moses says: "Would that all the people be prophets!"

A prophet is understood as a proclaimer of the will of God.

In the Gospel, John the disciple wants Jesus to stop an unnamed person from driving out demons. That person is an outsider! Jesus says: "Whoever is not against us is for us. Do not prevent him from doing this good deed."

We live in a world where the exclusion is everywhere.

Our planet is excluded from care, so temperatures are rising, greenhouse gases are the highest in history, and we are seeing

the biggest change in marine species in 3 million years. At least 40 villages in Oceania have had to move inland, where homes and livelihood were abandoned. Excluding earth has caused much of the human migration today.

The poor of the world who are excluded cry out. There are 281 Million who are undernourished and 80% live on less than \$10 a day, some less than \$1 a day. Our own home, Syracuse, ranks 13 among the nation's poorest cities.

We buy things from greedy corporations which unjustly use and waste resources of poor nations and exploit the peoples of these nations.

We belong to a fragmented institutional church that has excluded the rights of abused, the voices of women, gay people, and non-Catholics.

We are under a government that excludes refugees, Moslems, those who are poor, black, Hispanic, the abused, while feeding off of partisan agendas, unjust Executive Orders, and personal gain.

We, with our need to be comfortable and unchallenged, exclude those who are different in their perspectives, priorities, and beliefs and practices.

Both James and Jesus have very strong words against the behaviors of those who are unjust, excluding the rights and dignity of others.

The Gospel tolerates no outsiders, no one is made superior to others, no one is to be exploited degraded and ignored.

So, is there any good news here? No, there is not good news, there is great news! God has answered Moses prayer: “Would that all the people be prophets!” We have the Spirit, God’s Spirit to present the will of God.

Scholars suggest the likely Aramaic word for “Kingdom” that Jesus adopted was “malkuta”, a word that carries a controversial interpretation, controversial because the meaning is “empowerment”. The empowerment of God is within you.

We share the prophetic Spirit of Christ. It is a Spirit given for the sake of everyone. There is no room for silent complacency. What happens to our neighbor happens to us.

Maureen O’Connell in Compassion: Loving Our Neighbor in an Age of Globalization writes about an in-depth study she has done of Gospel compassion. She states that it includes four challenges:

1. A public and political commitment rather than a private and personal conviction.

Now, to make a public and political commitment one has to get involved with others; to be in relationship with the people with whom we stand.

We can’t protest for immigrants, those who are poor, the refugee, unless we are in relationship with them, eat with them, go to their homes, know their story, and feel their pain.

2. A transformative relationship given and received rather than an unreciprocated gift of self.

It not about just handing out what's needed, there must be a give and take, where I accept what you have to offer, a dish you're your culture, an invitation to each other's home, a festival of your culture, praying with you in your worship space.

3. An ongoing process of conversion rather than a series of unrelated acts of kindness. The Gospel call isn't about when I feel like it. It's a growing awareness and responses day after day.

4. A dangerous participation in justice rather than a comfortable expression of charity. Walking the talk, being willing to meet up with opposition, even within our own families.

Indeed, would that all the people be prophets, would that all the people of All Saints be prophets.