

Sunday Homily

26th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

26 SEPTEMBER 2021

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II

“No one who works a miracle in my name
is likely to speak evil of me.”

Illustration

Where can we find good role models in our modern world? Whose words do we admire for their wisdom and hope? Whose actions impress us with their compassion?

These questions were asked of a group of young Catholics attending a retreat. Their replies surprised their teachers, who had been expecting them to focus on Catholic role models. Mother Teresa's name was mentioned and her inspirational work in India caring for poor people in the Calcutta slums; also Pope John Paul II, who had faith that young people could play a positive role in Church and society. But many of the names were people who were not Catholic, indeed not even Christian.

For example, they talked of Martin Luther King, the African American Baptist leader prominent in the American civil rights movement. In 1964 he became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to end racial segregation without using violence. They mentioned Mahatma Gandhi, an Indian Hindu who believed in political change through non-violence; and the Dalai Lama, a Buddhist spiritual leader who promotes peace internationally. Pop stars and actors who support justice campaigns on cancelling international debt, fair trade and climate change also struck a chord with the young people.

Is it a matter of concern that young people look up to figures who, in Catholic terms, are not one of us, some of whom may even have little time for organised religion?

Gospel Teaching

In today's Gospel one phrase is repeated twice: "not one of us". The apostle John is indignant that a man outside of their circle is casting out devils. "Because he was not one of us we tried to stop him," John tells Jesus. But Jesus stuns the disciples by telling them that they have no monopoly on the healing power of Jesus. "Anyone who is not against us is for us," he says. Shortly before this incident, the apostles themselves had been unsuccessful in trying to exorcise an unclean spirit from a young man. Now they were upset to see someone outside their circle being more successful.