

26th Sunday of Ordinary Time  
29th September 2024



Anyone who is not against us is for us.

Mark 9

In this week's Sunday Gospel, Jesus asks his disciples to be tolerant. If tolerance were not good, why would Jesus require such from his disciples? As told, it started when after the disciples 'saw someone driving out demons' in the name of Jesus, they prevented him from performing exorcism because he did not belong to the followers of Jesus. The disciples were confused. Suddenly, what they had thought to be their exclusive right was no longer their own alone.

Jesus had his reasons: 'Do not prevent him,' he said, 'there is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us.' With these words, Jesus has taught his disciples about tolerance more as an exercise of Christian humility and charity.

This teaching is so relevant for us today as we live in an increasing multi-cultural world. Tolerance is one of the key British Values which we teach at school and, as this Gospel attests, is at the core of our Catholic faith. We should not think that salvation is reserved only for us who were baptised and who believe in Christ. Membership to his Church, faith, and the sacraments are still considered the ordinary ways to receive salvation but this does not exclude the possibility that God could offer other ways of bringing people to encounter the 'paschal mystery of Christ' in their lives. Like the outsider who performed exorcism in the name of Jesus, we have to understand that it is really Jesus who is the true source of salvation; the rest is just his medium.

Jesus calls us to religious tolerance, as long as it is not against him and his teachings. It is prudence perhaps that sometimes makes us doubt whether something or someone should be tolerated or not. However, Jesus challenges us towards religious tolerance so that individually we also learn to think deeply about the faith we have received: what is meant to truly follow Christ, how is it really to belong to him, what does it really mean to be a Catholic? In the answers our salvation is found.

**The last Sunday of September is traditionally a time to pray for the harvest and those who provide it**

O Lord, good Father, who in your providence  
have entrusted the earth to the human race,  
grant, we pray, that with the fruits harvested from it  
we may be able to sustain life  
and, with your help, always use them



**This week let us pray for:**

- ◆ our local community and all those in need;
- ◆ those affected by the recent earthquakes, storms and uprisings across the world;
- ◆ all those connected to our community who are unwell, upset or mourning.



**"Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another." Pope Francis**