

Our first reading today accounts an episode that at first glance seems rather trivial. The Lord God has granted the gift of prophecy to two characters who happened to not be in the official group of 70 elders who had been specifically set aside for the task. Right time but the wrong place. Joshua says they need to be stopped but Moses chastises him. Don't impede the work of the Lord. The Gospel touches on a similar scene. There are some free-lance exorcists plying their trade and the disciples want to stop them but Jesus says no, "Whoever is not against us is for us."

How do we unpack this message? How do we make it relevant?

I believe this quote comes from the Franciscan priest, Father Richard Rohr. He said, "Remember the opposite of love is not hate, the opposite of love is control." When we are in that controlling mode there is that lack of freedom to let God be God. And as such we are not able to enter into the mystery of God's love.

The next line from Jesus is this, "For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward."

Do we give that freely? How often is our giving, our response to a need met with calculation. Do they deserve my help? Will I get anything out of it? Is there sufficient gratitude shown? We want to be in control of our generosity.

I think a good definition of a saint is one who has learned to let go of that control. Have you met that kind of soul? Who gives, who serves without overthinking, without judging, who gives freely without trying to control.

Have you met that kind of soul who lives through suffering, trials and tribulations without that excessive analysis, incessant questioning, without complaint, blame and accusation?

These are the lovely souls, the loving souls who bear witness to Christ, who make our lives better, who make the world better. They are out of the control mode and have handed things over to God.

But how do we get out of the control mode?

Well ask ourselves, how do we pray?

Are we over analytical and calculating in our prayer? Measuring the number of prayers, types of prayer. If we are routine/rule of prayer is anyway off we have failed in our prayer?

How often do we describe prayer as a conversation with God? You know I just have a little talk with God. Which usually turns out to telling God what to do and what to change.

But do we listen with openness in prayer?