

WITH YOUR HELP JESUS, I WILL NOT SIN AGAIN

In today's Gospel (Mark 9:30-38-43,45,47-48) the disciples are jealous of someone else doing the Lord's work of casting devils out of the soul of a sinner. They tried to stop him, not understanding that the Holy Spirit shares His gifts with many people (Numbers 11:25-29), in order to bring salvation to the world. To practice charity and provide a glass of water to someone in need, in the name of Jesus, can qualify us for eternal life. Water symbolises life and in a similar way, if we give our time to pray for conversion of others, who spiritually thirst, is like giving them new life in Christ who is the Fountain of Life. We must always bear witness to our faith and be motivated to live and serve out of true love, which purifies the heart. Jesus is asking us not to let sin corrupt our hearts and to cut-off the bad practice of sin in our lives. It is not our hands, or feet or our eyes that cause us to sin, it is our hearts, our selfish desires and lack of will-power, that cause us to fall to sin. Jesus is not encouraging us to do physical harm to ourselves, but to spiritually cut-off the habit of sinning. Repetitive sinning robs us of heavenly graces and the receiving of the life-giving gifts from the Holy Spirit. For example, if a person repeatedly takes the name of *Jesus Christ* in vain, then their soul is polluted with sin. We should be mourning for our sins in confession and then we will be comforted in heaven someday (Matt 5:4). Hell welcomes careless sinners but Heaven welcomes those striving to be saints.

SAVE US FROM THE FIRES OF HELL

Jesus acknowledges the existence of Hell in today's Gospel. He says that it contains a '*worm that does not die or a fire that never goes out*'. If wood worm takes hold of a healthy wooden table, it eventually destroys it in the same way that sin destroys the soul. The Worm is Satan who does not die. Like a worm, he lives in the dark and feeds himself by painfully burrowing into the dead souls of those who chose to go to hell. Satan is like a maggot living on those who are dead to Christ. Jesus says that if we do not detach ourselves from sin now, then we will continue to live with its sufferable consequences in hell. Suffering is caused by sin. In heaven there is no sin, so no suffering. In hell, the stench of sin lingers on, so does suffering. The fire in hell never goes out and keeps the soul awake to suffer for their sins. Do not forget that Jesus first suffered for our sins, and asked us to follow Him, in order for us to avoid eternal suffering in hell. Those in hell cannot blame Jesus because they did not listen to Him (Mk 9:7). Earth offers a temporary suffering for a reason. We are asked to embrace it just for a little while and to willingly offer it up to God as a sacrifice, in order to bring salvation to the world. Christ's Suffering redeemed the world and we must become partakers in this redemption while on earth. Unrepentant sinners relied on their own wealth to save their souls, by rejecting the wealth of the Church's teachings (James 5:1-6). God bless, Fr Brendan.