



## Holy Trinity Catholic Church

*Served by the Jesuits in Southern Africa*

*Sermon Outline*  
**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year - B**  
29 September 2024

*Fr Russell Pollitt SJ*

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### Mark 9:38-48

<sup>38</sup> John said to him, “Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us.” <sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. <sup>40</sup> For he that is not against us is for us. <sup>41</sup> For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward.

<sup>42</sup> “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup> And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. <sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. <sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, <sup>48</sup> where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

*(Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition)*

#### 1. Nobody “owns” Jesus and his ministry

*“Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us.” (Mark 9:38)*

It is not about us or them. It is about whoever is moved by the Spirit and follows the Master, trying to conform to his life.

#### 2. Jesus takes it much further

*“For the one that is not against us is for us.” (Mark 9:40)*

Karl Rahner SJ: “Anonymous Christians” - all people who sincerely seek goodness and truth and strive to follow their own moral truths can respond positively to God’s grace even if they do not consciously identify with it they are implicitly united with Christ.

#### 3. The hard words of Jesus

*“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for them if a great millstone were hung round their neck and they were thrown into the sea.” (Mark 9:42)*

Are we responsible for the fact that some people feel they cannot approach Christ? Do we reject people? Do we waste the chance to grow in love of God and others therefore risking ‘ruining’ ourselves because we cannot get lost time back?

What is this uncomfortable and challenging message asking of **me** today?

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