

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



The outsider who is not one of us.

How do we treat them? Are they welcome, or frowned upon?

Joshua complained to Moses about two men who were prophesying without permission. The Apostle John complained to Jesus about someone who was driving out demons in Jesus' name.

Moses and Jesus were having none of it. That is, they did not stop the 'outsiders', but instead put their accusers in their place.

Clericalism is a scourge: a disordered attitude towards clergy, an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral authority. Clericalism runs amuck especially when those who have the authority share this attitude.

Clericalism seeks to monopolize authority. Clericalism does not allow for delegation. It is not inclusive of others, but restrictive and suspicious of them. The inner circle, the old boys club, the glass ceiling... these exist in our relationships with others.

Moses was not clerical, and neither was Jesus.

They had authority, but that did not blind them from allowing others to cooperate in their work, in their ministry, in their activity.

I was once in a parish, and a young man began to show up to weekday morning Mass. He had a leather jacket with studs, and punk-styled spiky hair. The regular morning Mass crowd were uneasy, some of them were visibly bothered by his being there. After he kept showing up for several days, one of the regular Mass-goers whispered to me 'What is he doing here?'

I was dumbfounded, and answered 'What do you mean, everyone is welcome here!'

For the in-crowd he didn't fit a mold, he was not part of the 'club', he was an outsider.

Jesus says to John: 'Do not prevent him, for whoever is not against us is for us.'

One does not have to be a cleric to be clerical. The malice of this attitude can cling to any of us.

One question the liturgy can ask of us today is: 'Who are the outsiders in my life? Do I limit their participation or welcome them to contribute?'

We know how Moses and Jesus answered. What will be our response?

Fr. Sean