

**1. Read** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.  
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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48** — Pg. 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## Gospel Reading – Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48 – Roman Missal

At that time, John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. 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. Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward." "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

## Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday of OT

*From the prologue of the commentary on Isaiah by Saint Jerome, priest*

I interpret as I should, following the command of Christ: *Search the Scriptures, and Seek and you shall find.* Christ will not say to me what he said to the Jews: *You erred, not knowing the Scriptures and not knowing the power of God.* For if, as Paul says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of God, then ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ. Therefore, I will imitate the head of a household who brings out of his storehouse things both new and old, and says to his spouse in the Song of Songs: *I have kept for you things new and old, my beloved.* In this way permit me to explain Isaiah, showing that he was not only a prophet, but an evangelist and an apostle as well. For he says about himself and the other evangelists: *How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news, of those who announce peace.* And God speaks to him as if he were an apostle: *Whom shall I send, who will go to my people?* And he answers: *Here I am; send me.* No one should think that I mean to explain the entire subject matter of this great book of Scripture in one brief sermon, since it contains all the mysteries of the Lord. It prophesies that Emmanuel is to be born of a virgin and accomplish marvelous works and signs. It predicts his death, burial and resurrection from the dead as the Savior of all men. I

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need say nothing about the natural sciences, ethics and logic. Whatever is proper to holy Scripture, whatever can be expressed in human language and understood by the human mind, is contained in the book of Isaiah. Of these mysteries the author himself testifies when he writes: *You shall be given a vision of all things, like words in a sealed scroll. When they give the writings to a wise man, they will say: Read this. And he will reply: I cannot, for it is sealed. And when the scroll is given to an uneducated man and he is told: Read this, he will reply: I do not know how to read.* Should this argument appear weak to anyone, let him listen to the Apostle: *Let two or three prophets speak, and let others interpret; if, however, a revelation should come to one of those who are seated there, let the first one be quiet.* How can they be silent, since it depends on the Spirit who speaks through his prophets whether they remain silent or speak? If they understood what they were saying, all things would be full of wisdom and knowledge. But it was not the air vibrating with the human voice that reached their ears, but rather it was God speaking within the soul of the prophets, just as another prophet says: *It is an angel who spoke in me; and again, Crying out in our hearts, Abba, Father, and I shall listen to what the Lord God says within me.*

#### Save our self, save others – Lesson and Discussion

*“Whoever causes one of these little ones...to sin...it would be better...if...he were thrown into the sea”*

After speaking to John and the other disciples about confronting strangers, Jesus uses strong language to discuss the responsibilities and duties toward “the little ones”.

**What does Jesus say that makes it “strong language”?** When Jesus says it is better for someone to attach a boulder to his neck, and then throw himself into the sea to drown rather than create scandal, that should raise a few eyebrows. “We should not pass lightly over these words, but should ponder them deeply and monitor our own behavior so that neither our words nor our attitudes will trouble the faith of the little ones or of the good People of God.”[1]

**What does he mean by “little ones”?** Jesus is talking about children.

**Why would it be a scandal to lead a child to sin?** The scandal caused toward a “little one” is heinous because they have no way of defending themselves from the evil that is being committed against them.

**What exactly is a scandal?** “Scandal is anything said, done, or omitted which leads another to commit sin”[2]. Since sin is the greatest of all evils, it is easy to understand why scandal is so serious and, therefore, why Christ condemns it so profoundly. Causing scandal to children is especially serious, because they are so less able to defend themselves against evil. “What Christ says applies to everyone, but especially to parents and teachers, who are responsible before God for the souls of the youth.”[3]

**Who else has a great amount of influence on the young?** Other examples include entertainers, athletes, and celebrities. While they are accountable for the young because of their influence on them, there are unfortunately so many from this group that cause scandal. We must pray for them to realize their great influence and to use it to promote truth and virtue, rather than sin.

**What are some examples of scandal in our time, especially scandal towards young children?**

**What are the ways we can be an accessory to another’s sin?** Many times we believe that as long as we don’t “personally” sin then we are not responsible. This is not true, however—we don’t want to make the same mistake that Cain made in saying to God, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”[4] We can be an accessory to another’s sin by poor counsel, command, consent, provocation, praise, concealment, partaking, silence, or even by defense of the sin committed. **How can I be an accessory to sin by poor counsel or command? Give examples of each.**

**When Jesus said “ if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off” and “if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out”, does He really mean it?**

No. What the Church Fathers have expressed in terms of this passage is to be ready to figuratively “cut off” any thing or person who leads us into sin. If someone is trying to entice us to sin using our eyes, hands, or feet we should try to distance ourselves at all costs or cut ourselves off completely so that we may not follow their way of life, which is the way to hell.[5] Jesus is giving a basis for Christian moral teaching when dealing with the “occasion of sin”. “He is very explicit: a person is obliged to avoid proximate occasions of sin, just as he is obliged to avoid sin itself; as God already put in the Old Testament: ‘Whoever lives in danger will perish by it’ (Sir. 3:26-27). The eternal good of our soul is more important than any temporal good. Therefore, anything that places us in proximate danger of committing sin should be cut off and thrown away. By putting things in this way our Lord makes sure we recognize the seriousness of this obligation.”[6] When we make an act of Contrition during Reconciliation we will strive to “avoid whatever leads me to sin”.

**Can you give an example of a relationship or activity that you have had to “cut off” because it was leading to sin?**

**What sins can be caused by our hands? What sins can be caused by our feet? What sins can be caused by our eyes?** To be able to answer these questions we should do an examination of conscience at the end of the day, and especially before we go to confession.

#### “The End” Notes

[1] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy Vol. IV, pg. 81

[2] St. Pius X, Catechism of Christian Doctrine, 417

[3] St. Mark’s Gospel Navaree Bible Commentary pg. 133

[4] Genesis 4:9 [5] cf. St. Augustine, De consensus Evangelistarum, IV, 16; St. John Chrysostom, Hom. On St. Matthew, 60

[6] St. Mark’s Gospel Navaree Bible Commentary pg. 134