**Homily** **for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*Rev. Francis D. Kim*
Everyone has dreams for the future, and all of us wish that our dreams will come true. Today, Jesus encourages us to think, to think about our dreams and the consequences of our choices, especially the choices and decisions that will count not just for now, but for eternity as well.

So, we have very insightful questions for all of us from today’s Gospel. Jesus asks us: Are we resisting both the temptations that come to us and our being a temptation to others?

The Greek word for temptation is exactly the same as the English word ‘scandal.’ The original meaning of scandal is a trap or a stumbling block which causes one to trip and fall. The Jews held that it was an unforgivable sin to teach another to sin.

There are a lot of temptations that come to us, and about these Jesus uses very dramatic terms. If your eye, arm, or leg is causing you to sin, cut it off. It is very graphic way of saying that we should not toy with temptations.

We can apply the words of Jesus to our time by saying: If the internet is causing you to sin, get a blocking device. If a CD or DVD is causing you to sin, throw it out. If friendships or relationships are causing you to sin, distance yourself from them.

        If television or the media causes you to sin, read a book. If some immoral behaviors cause you to sin, try to stop. Playing with temptation is like playing with fire. Sooner or later, we get burned.

Remember. God offers each of us the beautiful treasures: unending peace, joy, happiness, and eternal life with Him in His kingdom. We will lose these treasures if we follow our sinful nature and refuse to God’s way.

The easiest way to begin that journey is to recognize our own problems. Why am I so judgmental? Why do I seek to have more, to look like I’m better than others? Why does justice or care for those on the margins come with difficulty? What causes me to sin? What underlying unfreedom is in me?

From there, we can ask for forgiveness and healing. And, asking for healing can lead us to identify what instincts, practices, and habits I can change. Change is difficult. We only change something which has become habitual when we arrive at a deeper desire for something else.

Today, Jesus teaches us a remedy from the things that take us in such divisive, dangerous, destructive, and sinful directions. He tells us to ‘cut it off,’ to separate ourselves from what is the source of our self-defeat.

        Our pride can sometimes blind us to the wisdom of God. But, today’s Gospel also gives us hope. We can always have a second chance; we can change our minds and renew our life, and reconcile to God.

        God loves us, but He does not love our sins! God wants to change our hearts, so we should show by our speech and by our actions that we respect His will, and we are ready to do what He commands.

But, the choices is up to us! The choices and decisions we make now will affect and shape our future, both our future on earth as well as in the life after death. Then, what kind of future are you preparing for now?

Don’t make the wrong choice! God will help you and be with you always.