

**Homily – Tuesday, 18th Week in Ordinary Time, Mem. of St. Dominic
Catholic Schools Convocation Mass – August 8, 2023**

God had a special relationship with Moses. Even as Miriam was a prophetess, and Aaron was a priest, they were both envious of God's closeness to their brother. Faced with their hostility, Moses remains silent, aware of the undeserved gift of God's mercy for him. He "was by far the meekest man on the face of the earth." (Nm). God himself comes out in his defense saying: "Throughout my house he bears my trust". It is made clear that, although God loves everyone, He chooses to treat each person as He pleases.

Miriam suffers the punishment for her sin, but through Moses she is then shown a more intimate attribute of God's love: mercy! Consistent with the mercy he had received, Moses intercedes for her, offering a foresight of the mission of Jesus, who commands us to pray for those who persecute us. Every gift from God is intended for the recipient to pass on to others. Miriam is indeed cured.

We are always close to the danger of envy, not only of material goods, but even of the spiritual gifts that our brothers and sisters have received from God. When this temptation stalks us, we must take stock of the gifts we have received, give thanks for them, and place them at the service of others. Only then can we sincerely pray like we did in the responsorial psalm: "cleanse me." And if we ever feel envied against, Moses' reaction can serve as a model. If our cause is led by the Lord, He will come out in our defense. Our attitude will be to pray and intercede for those who do us wrong.

The gospel presents to us the miracle of Jesus walking on water and saying to Peter: Come! The disciples are terrified. In that

sense, it is much like when they were locked in the upper room for fear of the Jews, after the Passion and death of Jesus. The sea and darkness are symbols of death, so seeing Jesus walking on water is an anticipated sign of the resurrection. He has power to overcome death and sin. He says to them: “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid!”

We may also feel terrified as we experience the darkness of our time, and the challenges facing Catholic education and our own faith. At this time and age, as Pope Francis says, *“Consistency is an indispensable factor in the education of young people! Consistency! We cannot grow and we cannot educate without consistency: consistency and witness!”* As we are tempted to envy or to doubt, and as we are called to do the impossible, how can we remain consistent!

Consistency is transparency of the soul. The evil that passes through it leaves no trace, and the good that comes is communicated to others. It is when we are self-centered that we become dark and frightened, and begin to sink. But the Lord comes to save us. Faithful to the gift of God’s mercy for us, with our eyes fixed on the Lord, we will be able to get closer to Jesus and be rescued by him. He inspires our trust to “test” him and ask him to command us to do the impossible and be consistent. The experience of his saving power is what allows us to take courage and not be overcome by fear.

Through Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the most gifted of creatures, we have received God Incarnate. May she teach us to pray with a transparent heart, like Peter: “Lord, save me!” And may she make us consistent givers of the gifts we have received.