**Homily** **for the 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time***Rev. Francis D. Kim*

        Do you know why we often close our prayers with the phrase in Jesus’ name? Those words remind us that Jesus has opened the door to Heaven for us and that we can approach God only because of what He has done for us. But, this phrase is not a magic formula we add in order to make God answer our prayers. God answers our prayers solely because of Christ.

        Does this mean God always answers our prayers the way we wish He would? No, not necessarily, and the reason is because He loves us and knows what is best for us. What if parents gave their young children everything they ask for? You know what would happen: the children not only would be spoiled, but they might end up in great danger. Wise parents know when to say no.

        In a far greater way, God knows what is best for us. When you prayer, therefore, seek God’s will. Thank Go for the privilege of prayer, and make it part of your life every day.

        In the Gospel today, Jesus faces two accusations. The first one comes from some of His own family members, who were considering some sort of family ‘intervention.’ They were worried about His mental state.

        Jesus was preaching some rather ‘far out’ and strange things like offer no resistance to injury, if you are struck on the right cheek then let the left be struck also, love and pray for all your enemies, be good to those that hate you, and forgive the ones who harm you. No wonder some family members thought Jesus might be ‘going out of His mind.’

        The second accusation came from His enemies, the Scribes. They charged that Jesus was casting out demons by using the power of Satan and not by using any divine powers given to Him by God.

        Jesus told them how absurd and illogical their accusation was. It made absolutely no sense. Jesus asked them a simple question: “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot last.”

        Evil never overcome evil. Only goodness can overcome evil. When evil is responded to by another evil, nothing can ever get resolved. All that does is sets up a never-ending cycle of more and more evil.
        When bitterness or hatred is met with hatred, it only sows more seeds of hatred. So, on and on the cycle of evil will continue go, until someone decides to return a good act for an evil act.

        The so-called ‘insane’ and ‘far out’ message of Jesus’ preaching centered around love and forgiveness. He talked about turning the other cheek; walking the extra mile; loving everyone, even your enemy, and forgiving others as God forgives us our sins.

        Jesus totally believed that the only way to stop the vicious cycle of evil is to respond to evil by doing something good. What a different world this could be if nations, religious, various races, the poor and the wealthy men and women really respected and loved one another. Imagine a world without revenge, injustice, or war. But, it all depends on each one of us, on how we respond to evil in our own little world.

        If we want to accomplish anything good in our lives, we have to try to leave this world a little bit better off than when we found it; and the only way to do that is to try to live as Jesus lived.  We do that by trying to turn the other cheek; to love and forgive those who hate us; to respond to any harsh words, with soft spoken words; and to be willing to respond to evil by doing good.

        Perhaps, this may sound a little ‘insane’ to some people, but it is the only thing that will ever work. That is what Jesus is telling is in today’s Gospel.