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19 Thursday

THURSDAY, 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time

1 Samuel 18: 6-9, 19: 1-7

Ps 55: 2-3, 9-13

Mark 3: 7 - 12

These days, in the first readings at Mass, we're hearing episodes from the life of the most famous king of Israel, David, Jesus' great ancestor. The stories are well-known, familiar to Christians with even a minimal knowledge of their bible. Perhaps their relevance for our prayer and spirituality today may not always be so clear. Yesterday, for instance, the way David as a young man persuaded king Saul to let him challenge the giant leader of the Philistines, and killed him with a single sling-shot.

Today we hear what happened afterwards. David and king Saul returned from the battle encounter and David was showered with praise, with singing and dancing in his honour. And that made Saul very jealous, resentful of David's achievement, and suspecting him of wanting to be king in his place. So jealous, he even wanted to kill David. The feelings, emotions and relationships described in the story are very true to life, and quite relevant to the living of a Christian life. Jealousy, envy, resentment and friendship are surely familiar experiences most of us have, at least sometimes in life.

Envy and jealousy are similar, though actually different. . They make people feel uncomfortable, unhappy and somehow guilty. They're dangerous emotions, likely to lead to more serious unloving behaviour. In traditional Catholic teaching, envy is counted as one of the so-called seven capital (or "deadly") sins, because it can be the source of other sinful behaviour.

The healing of those feelings of jealousy and envy is the work of love, of genuine friendship, care and respect. David and Saul were reconciled through the filial fidelity and deep friendship of Saul's son Jonathan.