



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**10th Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 9, 2024**

Theme: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Gathering Prayer

All: O God, from whom all good things come, grant that we, who call on you in our need, may at your prompting discern what is right, and by your guidance do it. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Mark 3: 20-35

Then he went home; ²⁰and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. ²¹And when his friends heard it, they went out to seize him, for they said, "He is beside himself." ²² And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." ²³And he called them to him, and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. ²⁷But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man; then indeed he may plunder his house. ²⁸Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men whatever blasphemies they utter; ²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" – ³⁰ for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit." ³¹And his mother and his brethren came; and standing outside they went to him and called him. ³²And a crowd was sitting about him: and they said to him, "Your mother and your brethren are outside, asking for you." ³³And he replied, "Who are my mother and brethren?" ³⁴And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brethren! ³⁵Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Gospel Focus

Sometimes hearing this reading can make us feel pity for Mary. Jesus' response to her presence seems a bit callous, almost as if he is rejecting her in favor of his faithful listeners. But Jesus' message is one of radical inclusion. He does not just offer us citizenship in heaven; he offers us places in God's very family. When we are adopted as children of God in baptism, we become co-heirs with Christ. Mary is not rejected; after

all, she too is one who “does the will of God.” Jesus’ inclusion of all echoes her *Magnificat* with its call to upend the world’s power structures. We are called to echo Mary in saying “yes” to God’s call and in bringing Jesus ever more into the world.

Gospel Reflection

They say that “you can’t go home again.” That seems to be dynamic playing out in today’s gospel. Jesus, having launch out on his public mission, “came home” with his disciples. It is not to his hometown of Nazareth (6:1) that he returns but to Capernaum, where he has made a new home (2:1) and a new family. His relatives, who think he has lost his mind, first try to force him to come home to his family of origin. When that fails, his mother and siblings try to persuade him, but he has cast his lot with a newly formed family of disciples and there is no going back.

A second conflict erupts. Scribes accuse Jesus of being possessed. If he had responded with similar name-calling, they would have dug in their heels and the conflict would have escalated. Instead, Jesus points out the scribes distorted logic and their mistaken interpretation of his deeds by posing pointed questions, pronouncing true maxims, and inviting his opponents to accept the forgiving power of the Spirit. While the scribes may lose face in this public debate about power, Jesus opens a way for them to gain true honor by acceding to the power of the Spirit. Every sin, he insists, even their blasphemous accusation that he has an unclean spirit, can be forgiven.

The first reading from Genesis tells in mythical terms of the entry of sin into the world. The first human couple, having succumb to sin, has left the idyllic home provided by the Creator. The consequences are manifest in ruptured relationships with Earth, creatures, and human beings. They can never go home to what was before. When coupled with the gospel, however, there is hope-filled assurance of forgiveness offered to all and an invitation into a new home and a new family in Christ.

In the gospel, immediately after the assurance that all sins will be forgiven (v.28), comes an exception: “whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never have forgiveness” (v.29). The meaning of this verse has long been a puzzle. Some scholars understand verses 28 and 29 to represent two opposing sides of an early Christian debate. They propose that some people in Mark’s community thought it impossible to welcome back a repentant member who, under duress, had foresworn Christ (“blasphemed”) and betrayed the community. Would they ever be able to forgive and trust such a one again? Some said yes; some said no. For some scholars. Verse 28 represents Jesus’ response of unqualified forgiveness for any sin, while verse 29 is not from Jesus’ lips but represents the voice of the Markan community.

It is important to note that Jesus does not say that God will not offer forgiveness for the sin of blasphemy, but that one who does not rightly acknowledge the power of the Spirit will never have forgiveness. That is, those who refuse to open themselves to the power of the Spirit cannot experience forgiveness by their own decision not to allow in the forgiveness and healing that is offered them. All sinners, if they choose, can go home into God’s welcoming arms.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Gen 3:9-15

⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the

LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Responsorial Psalm — Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

R: With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to my voice in supplication. **(R)**

If you, O Lord, mark iniquities, Lord, who can stand? But with you is forgiveness, that you may be revered. **(R)**

I trust in the Lord; my soul trusts in his word. More than sentinels wait for the dawn, let Israel wait for the Lord. **(R)**

For with the Lord is kindness and with him is plenteous redemption; and he will redeem Israel from all their iniquities. **(R)**

Second Reading — 2 Cor 4:13–5:1

¹³ Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak, ¹⁴ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵ For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. ¹⁷ For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. ^{5:1} For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

500. Against this doctrine the objection is sometimes raised that the Bible mentions brothers and sisters of Jesus. The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact James and Joseph, "brothers of Jesus", are the sons of another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls "the other Mary". They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression.

574. From the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, certain Pharisees and partisans of Herod together with priests and scribes agreed together to destroy him.³¹⁷ Because of certain acts of his expelling demons, forgiving sins, healing on the sabbath day, his novel interpretation of the precepts of the Law regarding purity, and his familiarity with tax collectors and public sinners³¹⁸ -- some ill-intentioned persons suspected Jesus of

demonic possession.³¹⁹ He is accused of blasphemy and false prophecy, religious crimes which the Law punished with death by stoning.

1864. "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven." There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss.

Sharing and Discussion

1. Jesus said, "28Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men whatever blasphemies they utter." Should we be worried about being enslaved by the devil nevertheless? Why?

2. 35Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother." What does this mean to you?

3. 16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day" How does this verse taken from 2 Cor 4:16, encourage you to live life?

Closing Prayer

All: Prophetic God, you sent your Son into the world to speak truth to power. Hear our prayers that in the days ahead we might serve you with courageous spirits. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen