

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time year B

Genesis 3:9-15, Psalm 130, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1, Mark 3:20-25

On this tenth Sunday of ordinary time, the Church reminds us that as humans, we all have an existential struggle against evil. However, the good news is that we are illuminated through the assurance of victory. It is Christ, the seed of the Woman (Mary) who helps us to obtain this victory in our daily and earthly struggle against evil.

The first reading is from the story of the fall of Adam and Eve. It is an integral part of our salvific history which reminds us of something that we inherited from them. That is, the Adamic nature due to Original Sin. Also, it reminds us of the consequences of disobedience.

In the second reading, Paul simply brings to light the significant characteristics of a life lived in faith. With the words of the psalmist he testifies: "We also believe and therefore we speak (Ps 116:10), knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus to life will raise us." Yes, this is a great profession of faith."

As Jesus came home, a crowd once again gathered. How we long to see great crowds come to church! We see large crowds at Christmas and Easter. If something terrible happens in the world, we might see more people here but, if it's just an ordinary Sunday, our churches are not very full anymore. Why?

Some people have abandoned any notion of faith and God. They think we might be out of our minds for believing. I would ask if they have ever really opened themselves to believe.

Perhaps the "serpent tricked" them just as with Adam and Eve. I think today the serpent likes to spread confusion by telling us that no one believes everything that our faith teaches us. So, the serpent says it's okay for us to pick and choose what we believe.

This leads to relativism where people think it is okay to believe whatever one wants as long as you don't hurt anyone. They promote tolerance but they don't tolerate what our faith teaches. Thinking of what Jesus says in the gospel, Satan tries to tie us up so he can plunder our house.

What are some other ways that the serpent tries to trick us not to come to church?

Satan likes to mask our sins so we don't see our own sins, he likes us to see the sins of those who do promote the faith to make them look like hypocrites. Nothing excuses

these past sins but we are sinners in need of redemption who need to admit our need for God's help.

Missing one week to Church becomes two weeks. Two weeks becomes three. Then, it becomes I'll go once a while and I need to do other stuff. Then, we think we are doing okay (that's what the serpent says anyway) and we find it has been a while since we have even acknowledged God. Then, something bad happens and we have trouble finding God because we don't have a relationship with Jesus. We become distant from God.

This is why the serpent wants us to think it is okay not to go to church on a regular basis. He knows the best way to lead us away from God can be in little steps so we don't even notice. Jesus laid down his life to save us. Satan leads us astray not for our good but to win souls for himself. Choosing to come to church over other things says we put God first in our lives.

In today's Gospel Jesus has just been healing and casting out demons in Galilee. The scribes who came down from Jerusalem are not just honestly mistaken; they accuse Him of being possessed by the prince of demons.

As St. Bede explains, "The Lord has also bound the strong man, that is, the devil: which means, He has restrained him from seducing the elect, and entering into his house, the world; He has spoiled his house, and His goods, that is men, because He has snatched them from the snares of the devil, and has united them to His Church."

The scribes blaspheme by attributing this work of the Holy Spirit to demons. Jesus adds a statement that shocks us at first: "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness." That does not mean that there are any limits to the mercy of God (CCC 1864). Rather, the only sin that cannot be forgiven is the deliberate refusal to accept the mercy offered through the Holy Spirit.

Last Wednesday I attended a Healing prayer service for a family in this Church. After the healing service Family found inner happiness and healing. I sincerely thank and congratulate tFr Marreddy and the exorcism team for your spiritual strength and ministry to bind the serpent with the mighty name of Jesus.

Instead, we must imitate those who sat at Jesus' feet. For, as He said, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother, sister, and mother."