

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time B2018

All the readings of this Sunday talk about the brotherhood in Christ. They show that it is by doing the will of God that it is acquired. They invite us to believe firmly in Jesus and to do the will of his Father in order to be part of the divine family.

The first reading talks about the fault of the first parents and its consequences. It shows how each one of them tried to reject the fault of the disobedience to God's commandments on the other. Finally, it shows the punishment given to the serpent for having induced Adam and Eve into sin.

What is behind this text is the idea that it is very difficult to accept the responsibilities of one's mistakes. Second, there is the idea that any disobedience to God's commandments bears consequence on those who disobey. The last idea is the truth that it is only when we do the will of God that we can belong to him.

This text allows us understanding the point of today's Gospel in which Jesus talks of his true parenthood. First of all, the Gospel starts with Jesus' gathering with his disciples and the crowd surrounding him to the point that it was impossible for him to eat. Then, it speaks of his critics who affirmed that he was possessed by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, while his family thought he has lost his mind.

After that, the Gospel gives the reaction of Jesus who refuted the criticism by stating that such a criticism would mean that Satan is divided if he expels demons by the power of the prince of demons. From there, the Gospel speaks of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit for which there is no forgiveness.

The Gospel ends with Jesus' family looking to see him and his reaction that those surrounding him and listening to him were his family.

What do we learn from today's Gospel? Today, I want to talk about the brotherhood in Christ. What do I mean by that? I will explain. But, first of all, let me start with an observation on the reality of family.

In fact, each of us has a family. The family plays a big role in the life of each one. In itself, the family is the place where we learn the first steps of life like talking, walking, speaking, socializing, etc. It is also the place where we learn the first rudiments of what life is, how to conduct ourselves in society, how to behave, what is right to do in society, what shall be avoided, what is morally good and what is not, etc. Finally, the family is the place of consolation and encouragement, especially when we are tired of our labors and are misunderstood by the external world.

The family is so important that many among us emigrate from one State to another in order to be close to the grandkids. In the same way, those who grow up without family have serious psychological problems, as I have experienced with the children in the Juvenile Correction Center.

However, it is striking to realize that in today's Gospel Jesus does not care when he is told that his mother and brothers are looking for him. He seems to belittle them by alleging that his mother, brother or sister, is anyone who does the will of God.

But, why is he doing so? What does he want to teach us? In fact, Jesus does not deny the reality of family. He does not disown his relatives. What he wants to tell us is that

the biologic cannot exhaust our consideration on the reality of family. Besides the biologic family, there is also the spiritual family that unites us because of our faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, our true identity reaches its fullness when it transcends the limits of the biologic in order to find completion in God.

Such a vision has some consequences I want to share with you. First, if a brother, a sister or a mother is the one who does the will of God, it means that our belonging to the family of God is determined on how we strive to do the will of God in our life and not by doing what pleases us.

Second, what makes someone a brother or sister is not necessarily the sharing in the same blood, origin or history. It is the sharing in a common kinship as sons and daughters of God. Therefore, our human criteria of distinguishing one from another, like race, language, nationality, culture, become secondary with regard to the reality that defines us as children of God.

Moreover, even if it is true that the family bond cannot be broken, it is, however, real that sometimes friendship in Jesus can be more than family tie. In other words, when there is a recognition that we are all bound up together because God, our creator, is a Father to all of us, the appreciation that follows is based on a tie that transcends family origin, clan belonging, and national unity.

Finally, by living and practicing the brotherhood in Christ, we embrace the diversity of our humanity. We acknowledge that all of us, in spite of our differences, be they cultural, national, linguistic, intellectual, racial, are but an expression of God's being. For that specific reason, we have to accept each other as God has accepted us in his Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the whole of our humanity in its variety, instead of being considered as a threat of a group against another, becomes a joyful welcome of the richness with which God has endowed us since the creation of the world.

That is why I can say with conviction that in a world divided according to race, culture, language and color of the skin, the brotherhood that derives from the sharing in the same God-given kinship is a strong witness to the world that it is possible to live together in spite of our differences. In fact, the world needs today more than ever people who can live such a genuine relationship with one another based not on some interests or human benefits, but on unselfish affection and authentic consideration.

Let us pray, then, that the Lord may help us listen to his word with open heart and put it into practice so that we belong to the family of God. Let us ask him for the grace of looking at each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. God bless you all!

Genesis 3: 9-15; 2 Corinthians 4: 13-5: 1; Mark 3: 20-35.

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