

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time B2024

I want to start this homily with an observation. As human beings, we have many tendencies. One of them is what we can call “a blame game”. A blame game is a tendency that consists in projecting our own faults on others. For instance, a boy who broke a mirror in a house will say: “It is not me. I did not do it. I was just passing by and the mirror fell itself from the wall.” We have also heard many times between the husband and wife: “It is his or her fault. It is the fault of my husband; he never listens to me. Or, “It is not my fault. It is my wife’s fault that the kids are running all over the house”.

It takes courage and maturity to take responsibility for whatever we did rather than to simply play a blame game. When people react that way, it means that they feel shame for the wrong they have done. Their sense of shame can sometimes lead them to withdraw from those they have wounded. And it takes real courage to own up the wrong done, to apologize, and make amends for what was wrongly done.

That is exactly what happened to Adam and Eve. They were created innocent, but with free will, and given a wonderful life. They walked with God and they talked with him. They were given only one commandment and the freedom to obey or disobey that commandment.

However, when they encountered Satan, they lost it all. They disobeyed God and made the wrong choice. They turned against their Creator. They were seduced into thinking that they could be gods themselves. They succumbed to Satan’s temptation. They accepted a lie that in the end ruined their life. As a consequence of their shame for having acted against God’s commandment, they hid. And to avoid responsibility, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve in turn blamed the devil!

This chapter of Genesis teaches us a profound truth about sin. When we sin we cannot face each other openly. Neither can we face God. The only necessary thing we need to do, which can save us from shame and blame game, is to accept our responsibility and make amend.

Our Lord Jesus has come to set us free from the power of Satan and the blame game. Our Lord has come to guide us to the whole liberating truth. Unfortunately, today’s Gospel tells us that the Jewish religious leaders could not accept the truth. Instead, they tried to obscure the reality of our Lord’s life and mission. They could not accept the revelation of our Lord and his good works. They believed they knew all the truth that God had revealed. So, they pronounced that our Lord was possessed by Satan himself. They insisted that it was the power of Satan that enabled him to exorcise the demons.

But, our Lord had a strong argument. If what he was doing was guided by Satan, it meant that Satan was working against himself. Can really a house divided against itself cannot stand? If he was chasing out the demons, it means he was stronger than Satan.

What the scribes were doing was a sin that could never be forgiven. They were blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who opens our heart to recognize God's power at work in our Lord and to look for forgiveness through the Sacrament. Forgiveness was impossible to the scribes because in their pride, they could never admit that they were wrong!

My friends, we are, indeed, fortunate that we can be forgiven for our sins. No sin we commit is beyond forgiveness if we are sorry, repent, take the blame, and change our behavior. In a revelation to a Saint called Margaret Mary that his heart is like an "Ocean of Mary." All our sins are like a drop of water in the ocean. Our Lord came to reveal God's love and forgiveness. He is the offspring of Eve. He is the one who continues to crush the head of Satan with his heel.

Saint Paul reminds us in today's second reading how blessed we are because of the gift of faith. If we remain faithful to God, we will be raised up just as our Lord was raised from the dead. Yes, we can suffer terrible things during our time in this world. Our physical body, itself, will waste away with old age. Our life here is as fragile and temporary like living in a tent. However, in no way can it be permanent. We are, already, laying the foundation for a permanent and eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven! This is not a dwelling made with human hands, but eternal and whose architect is God himself.

My friends, our faith has a price. It allows us to be part of the family of our Lord. What counts here is not blood tie or physical bond, but rather faith. We are our Lord's mother and brothers and sisters if we do the will of God. "It is the one who does the will of my Father who is my mother, my sister, my brother". This is a high relationship we all need to have for our lives. Doing the will of God obtains us to be part of the family of our Lord, to share in his own heritage. So let us not miss such a great privilege and opportunity.

[Adapted from the homily of Fr Russel Terra, 10th Ordinary Sunday, 2024]

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



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