

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 9 June 2024

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

Homily: Fr. Ken

This weekend we continue our journey through the season of Pentecost, the birthday of our Church.

In the Gospel we learn that people followed Jesus with such enthusiasm that he did not even make time to eat. Jesus' criticism of the religious institutions established by those considering themselves authorized interpreters of the law preoccupy "his own", according to the literal translation of the text that many translate by "his family". They are people close to Jesus, including those for whom he is a blood relative. They are concerned by his disconcerting preaching and want to get him away from the crowd following him. They even fear he has gone out of his mind. The reaction is harsh, but it makes us see how difficult it was then and still is now to accept Jesus' message.

In our own time, the courage and evangelical spirit of St. Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, prompted the privileged of his country to spread the rumor, even in leaflets at the very time of his funeral, that the archbishop was psychologically unbalanced. He was so devoted to the poor of El Salvador, that he didn't even make time to eat.

Opposition to Jesus' message is becoming more obstinate. He is accused of siding with those who oppose God (the term "Satan" means "adversary"). In two brief parables, Jesus proves how ridiculous the charge is, and he takes the offensive. God is always ready to forgive our sins and offenses, but rejecting the kingdom of life by alleging that the one proclaiming it is possessed by an evil spirit is a serious sin against the Holy Spirit. That type of behavior is neither occasional nor a fault; it is a premeditated and systematic attitude. It is a perversion of faith itself, and it expresses the intention of continuing with this attitude: a very serious sin, hence the mention of Adam's sin.

As the Gospel narrative continues, Jesus is told that his mother and his brothers and sisters are looking for him. Jesus then takes advantage of that opportunity to clarify who belongs to his true family: the criterion consists in putting God's will into practice. That does not mean a rejection of family ties but a deepening of those ties. Mary's physical motherhood is inseparable from her acceptance of God's will. She freely welcomes the Son of God in

her own body. In her, the woman and the believer become one. Here, Mark does not mention the name of Mary (in fact, he only mentions it once in his gospel. This discretion about the person whom a contemporary theologian calls "the first believer" emphasizes the content of Mary's faith: Jesus and putting God's will into practice.

That faith must be passed on. The experience of faith leads to our speaking about it. Inspired by a psalm, St. Paul says: "We believe and so we speak". Speaking means making sure that our "inner nature", the "new person", is affirmed while our "outer nature", the "old person" who considers the kingdom as madness or even something demonic, is torn down.

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