

## Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

[Reading I: Gn 3:9-15](#)

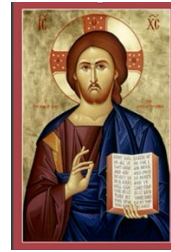
[Responsorial Psalm: 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8](#)

[Reading II: 2 Cor 4:13—5:1](#)

[Gospel: Mark 3:20-35](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/060924.cfm>



Today the church resumes Sunday readings of Ordinary Time after celebrating the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and the two feasts reflecting other mysteries of God and the Eucharist.

The Gospel presents two conflicts. The first is between Jesus and the religious authorities and the second is between Jesus and those who knew him from home. The Pharisees charge that Jesus is possessed and acting by the authority of Satan. Jesus is not acting as the Jewish religious leaders commonly do. Their attention is on understanding all the fine points of the law and making sure that each aspect is fully followed. Jesus has confronted evil and spent time with the poor and outcasts. His attention has not been on the law but on people.

The Pharisees charge that he is acting by the power of Satan. In the Mediterranean culture, honor and dishonor were very important. The Pharisees call Jesus possessed and an agent of Satan spreading evil to dishonor him. They seek to embarrass him and discredit him. Jesus responds that a kingdom cannot last if it is working against itself. If it is divided within, it will not last. It is not logical for Jesus to be acting out of an evil purpose. Instead, Jesus declares that all sins will be forgiven. God is more interested in forgiving people than condemning them. This was not part of the Pharisees' focus. Jesus turns the table on the Pharisees and declares that they do not recognize the Spirit of God at work and are therefore they are the ones who are blaspheming by denying the presence and work of God.

Secondly, earlier in Chapter 3 of Mark (Mark 3:6), it was noted that "The Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him to put him to death." One way to protect a family member from harm was to declare that he was out of his mind. It is out of concern for Jesus that his relatives seek to protect him from their plot. They are not making a judgement about his message but acting out of concern for him.

Two issues are raised that seem in conflict with Catholic teaching and tradition. The way in which Mary is treated and the issue of the brothers and sisters of Jesus.

Mark is the first Gospel that is written in the late 60s AD near Rome. The Church is under persecution and Christians are being killed. Mark does not contain any infancy stories and has a focus on the teachings of Jesus. Mark seeks to present the Heart of the Gospel message to strengthen and encourage the Christians in their time of trial. Mary does not receive much recognition in this text. Interest in Mary had not yet developed. The role of Mary receives much fuller attention in Matthew and Luke which were written 15 to 20 years later in a different cultural context.

When Jesus declares "who are my mother and brothers?" he is not excluding Mary. Jesus describes his family as those who hear the word of God and keep. Mary is a prime example of one who heard the word of God and kept it. Her response to the angel in Luke's Gospel, "May it be done to me according to your word." Is an example for all of us. Jesus is not interested primarily in blood relationships but in being a brother to all who seek to serve God.

Verse 31 states that "His mother and his brothers arrived." This would seem to conflict with Catholic tradition that Mary remained a virgin. The ancient languages had a wider meaning of the words for brother and sister. While in English, there is brother, half-brother, stepbrother, and

more. In Judaism, there is brother or sister. This would include all who are related. In some cultures, other children who grew up together, who shared meals and frequented each other's homes, were also called brother or sister. So, the exact meaning of the author cannot be determined for these words.

The first reading from Genesis identifies the source of evil. Evil is not from God. The temptation for Adam and Eve is that if they eat the fruit, they will be like God. When a person takes the perspective that they can control everything, that person is presuming to be God. People are creatures and they need the creator. Suffering results from trying to be in complete control of one's life. The effect of human action has brought suffering to humanity. These effects are presented in examples of human experience. Before the fall, people had a life of bounty and pleasure. After the fall they lost these. Humanity has caused the suffering because they chose not to be in good relationship with themselves, with others nor with God. The resolution of this was presented in the Gospel - doing the will of God.

The second reading is from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. In this chapter, Paul is defending himself from false prophets who have come to Corinth. Many of these other leaders have pointed to their gifts and achievements. Paul has suffered and shows signs of weakness. He points to all that he has endured in serving Christ. His focus, and Paul invites us to make it the focus of every Christian, is to deepen our relationship and service of God. This will guide us into our eternal home and life with God.

**Themes:**

Sin, Evil, and Temptation

Mercy of God

Christian Hope

Will of God

**Reflection Questions:**

How do you recognize or experience evil?

When has an evil inclination seemed to be a good direction to you?

How do you recognize or experience the work of God in life?

What makes relationships important or significant to you?

What does it mean to you to "do the will of God"?

Where is your life focused – on achievements and fame – or on developing your relationship with God for all eternity?

**Suggestions for Prayer:**

For the Church: that we may truly be the family of God, taking the Word of God to heart, fulfilling God's will with our words and deeds, and being a sister or brother to one another

For a spirit of hope: that all who are experiencing affliction may, like St Paul, draw strength from the resurrection of Christ and be renewed within, so that they may give witness and glory to God

For growth in faith: that amid sufferings and trials, God will help us to rely upon God's strength and power so that we may give witness to the Gospel

For the gift of discernment: that we may recognize the work of God within and around us, cooperate with it more fully, and never be deceived by the glamour of evil

For guidance: that God will inspire all who are confronting the powers of evil and help them to bring freedom to those entrapped by addictions, prejudice, human trafficking, or violence