

- This Gospel passage, of course, is one of those used to try to argue against our doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary... speaking about “brothers and sisters” of Jesus.
- But in ancient societies—like in some societies even today—cousins and near relatives were considered one’s “brothers” and “sisters” just as much as the sons and daughters of our parents.
- For example, in Genesis, Abraham calls Lot his “brother”, although Abraham was by actual relation his uncle.
- It becomes very obvious in John’s Gospel that Mary had no other children because Jesus entrusts her to the care of St. John—certainly not Jesus’ brother.
- If Mary had other children, by Jewish Law—and simply by natural affection—they would have taken care of her.
- And think about St. Joseph. Joseph knew by revelation that God had chosen Mary to bear the Son of God—to be the spouse of the Holy Spirit.
- Any man with any sense of self-preservation, I think, would have not dared to touch Mary after that.
- Trying to step into Joseph’s shoes, it seems that he would likely have viewed Mary with a tremendous sense of awe and reverence, and would have felt unworthy, and honored beyond reckoning, to have been even chosen to care for her and Jesus.
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- Now today all of our readings touch upon that terrible sin of pride.
- But what kind of pride are we talking about? What kinds of pride are there?
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- Well...pride in a child’s accomplishments is not necessarily bad; in fact, what we might call “pride” may not be pride in the strictest sense at all...but rather joy in his success...and simply relief that he is traveling a good and productive road.
- But that pride can become sinful when we think ourselves inherently “better” than others, and that we must avoid...because

God gives the gifts to His own purpose; it is up to us to try to discern how best to use them for the greatest true good.

- As St. Paul writes: *“What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?”* (1Cor 4:7 RSV)
- Whether it is intellect or beauty or ability, who can say that we created it on our own? God is our Creator.
- Certainly we try to develop what we have for the good (hopefully), but our intrinsic nature is given by God.
- Indeed, who is “better”—the genius who seeks to glorify himself, or the simple man who seeks the glory of God and the good of his neighbor?
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- Now Dictionary.com’s first definition for “pride” is: “A high or inordinate opinion of one’s own dignity, importance, merit or superiority, whether as cherished in the mind or as displayed in bearing, conduct, etc.” That’s a pretty good definition.
- Disobedience to God is always rooted in pride—that ***I*** know better than God. This is the very sin of Satan Himself...and thus is the vehicle by which Satan tries to drag us down as well.
- Pride is the sin related in the story of the Garden of Eden...Adam and Eve believing they knew better...reaching out to take the one thing forbidden to them...and by doing so, being cast out of paradise.
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- This is the constant theme throughout the Bible.
- At the Exodus, the Israelites’ feet barely left Egypt before they start complaining and rebelling against God—pride in their own ideas and judgment over God.
- David, Solomon...and after them, almost an unbroken line of kings who did not obey God...resulting in their destruction and exile in 587.

- In our first reading, God laments the disobedience (therefore the pride) of Israel: “...*they and their ancestors have revolted against me to this very day...Hard and obstinate of heart...*”
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- This is the most dangerous pride of all—rebellious against God by thinking that we know better.
- But God is creator of all...the very essence of goodness...of justice...of mercy...of all that is good. He IS wisdom.
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- What is His direction for us? His Word in scripture.
- Whom did He give us as the continuing authority of that Word? The Church...which He established on Peter and the apostles.
- Jesus tells Peter: “*What you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven*”...giving the Church the ultimate authority on earth...the final word.
- Jesus tells the apostles: “*I will be with you always, to the close of the age*”...promising His guidance until His second coming.
- Jesus tells the apostles: “*When the Spirit of truth comes [as He did at Pentecost], he will guide you into all the truth...a promise directed toward the leaders of the Church.*” (Joh 16:13 RSV)
- And Jesus also tells the apostles: “*He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects Him who sent me*”...who is, of course, no less than God the Father.
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- Yes, sometimes the Church may be wrong when it steps out of its purview...such as with Galileo. As one later saint said: “*The Bible teaches how to go to Heaven, not how the heavens go.*”
- But matters of faith and morals are the Church’s direct responsibility and area of expertise; that is the Church’s “science”.
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- God cannot lie...and therefore Jesus cannot lie...and thus, He will certainly guide the Church in truth always.

- All throughout history people have vaunted their own opinions against God and those chosen to represent Him—against Abraham, Moses, the prophets...the apostles and the Church...and even against Jesus, who is God incarnate.
- ...and it never goes well.
- What is the old saying?...that insanity is to repeat the same thing over and over and expect a different result? Can we not learn, then, from 3600 years or so of salvation history to not rebel against God?
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- So be the true rebel!...and dare to trust in God!
- ...and trust in the Church's teaching...the teacher assigned to guide us in the truth that God has given us...
- ...remembering God speaking through the prophet Isaiah: *“Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.”*
(Isa 49:15 NAB)

Reading 1

[Ez 2:2-5](#)

As the LORD spoke to me, the spirit entered into me
and set me on my feet,
and I heard the one who was speaking say to me:
Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites,
rebels who have rebelled against me;
they and their ancestors have revolted against me to this very day.
Hard of face and obstinate of heart
are they to whom I am sending you.

But you shall say to them: Thus says the LORD GOD!

And whether they heed or resist—for they are a rebellious house—
they shall know that a prophet has been among them.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 123:1-2, 2, 3-4](#)

R. (2cd) **Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.**

To you I lift up my eyes
who are enthroned in heaven —

As the eyes of servants
are on the hands of their masters.

R. **Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.**

As the eyes of a maid
are on the hands of her mistress,
So are our eyes on the LORD, our God,
till he have pity on us.

R. **Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.**

Have pity on us, O LORD, have pity on us,
for we are more than sated with contempt;
our souls are more than sated
with the mockery of the arrogant,
with the contempt of the proud.

R. **Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.**

Reading II

[2 Cor 12:7-10](#)

Brothers and sisters:

That I, Paul, might not become too elated,
because of the abundance of the revelations,
a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan,
to beat me, to keep me from being too elated.

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Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me,
but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you,
for power is made perfect in weakness."
I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses,
in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me.
Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults,
hardships, persecutions, and constraints,
for the sake of Christ;
for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Gospel

[Mk 6:1-6](#)

Jesus departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples.
When the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue,
and many who heard him were astonished.
They said, "Where did this man get all this?
What kind of wisdom has been given him?
What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands!
Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary,
and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?
And are not his sisters here with us?"
And they took offense at him.
Jesus said to them,
"A prophet is not without honor except in his native place
and among his own kin and in his own house."
So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there,
apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them.
He was amazed at their lack of faith.