

- So, in a way, Jesus is affirming the old adage: “You can choose your friends, but you can’t choose your relatives,”...though He is not, of course, rejecting His blood relations here (especially His Blessed Mother!), but simply saying that His—and our, as His disciples—true family are those who follow the will of God, regardless of any other relationship.
- As He tells us elsewhere: “*He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me...*” (Matthew 10:37-38)
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- Blood ties are accidental, marital ties are temporary...but discipleship in Christ is a freely-chosen and eternal relationship beyond all others...and there is no closer affinity than that of love of--and discipleship in--Jesus Christ.
- As we read from Paul today: “*...we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.*”
- Likewise, it is our relationship with Christ which ties His faithful with invisible yet unbreakable strings of grace to one another...for eternity.

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- Now, that temporary, transitory nature of the things of the world of which Paul speaks is one of the most difficult things for people to realize...so often caught up in the world’s values of wealth, fame, etc.
 - This is one of the messages of the Creation story in Genesis, part of which we heard today.

- As you well know, in the story the serpent tempts Eve with the immediacy of the lusciousness of the forbidden fruit...and she and Adam eat it contrary to God's command—contrary to the good.
- But note the serpent's tactics of using truths, but out of context and mixed with lies in order to deceive.
- Remember how Satan quoted scripture in the temptations of Jesus, but out of context to try to tempt Him.
- Likewise in the Creation story Satan does the same, telling Eve: *"You will not die [if you eat it]. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* (Genesis 3:4) Vanity, O Vanity...
- And after they eat: *"Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked..."* ...stripped naked of grace which they lost by their own free will. By their own bad choice.
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- And why? Because of their lack of vision for the eternal good, which God is...preferring immediate pleasure instead, as we read: *"...the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate."*
- But...that's how Satan works; he tempts us with the immediate so that we discard—if not openly reject—the eternal. Yet that tempting fruit is rotten to its core.
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- The eternal comes whether we want it or not...whether it is eternal bliss with God...or not.
- Yet, by His grace, when we do sin, very often our OWN eyes are opened...hopefully driving us to repentance and confession before

we suffer that eternal loss...which, like Adam and Eve, we choose ourselves...or not.

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- In the movie “Troy”, Achilles challenges two other Greek soldiers who hold captive his love interest at their king’s command. Achilles warns: “I have no quarrel with you, brothers, but if you do not release her, you will never see home again. Decide!”
- Likewise, when we are tempted to sin—to commit an offense...a crime against God’s goodness—we must decide...each and every time.
- Yet always God’s grace is there with us, as Paul assures us: *“[God] will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”* (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- “Escape” is a good term...and very often the best advice and action is simply to flee—flee the computer when tempted to porn, flee to co-worker tempting you to sin against chastity or marriage, flee whatever tempting situation in which you may find yourself.
- So flee to your family, the Church. Flee to your strength: to Christ.

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- The more we practice virtue, the more it becomes habit that we do with increasingly less thought and deliberation.
 - But the same applies to vice and sin...until we risk falling into that unforgivable sin of which Jesus speaks today.

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- A terrifying prospect: a sin which can never be forgiven.
 - What is it? It is attributing evil to what is good...calling the Spirit of God the spirit of Satan...calling evil good and good evil...

exactly as condemned by the prophet Isaiah: “*Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter...*”

(Isaiah 5:20)

- The Catechism assures us: “*There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss.*” (CCC 1864)
- Yet the Catechism also reminds us: “*Jesus is the devil’s conqueror: he ‘binds the strong man’ to take back his plunder.*” (CCC 539)...if only we follow Him in truth and in faith.
- We cannot know when we might be called to God, so there is never a moment to lose...remembering St. Paul today, that for Christ’s faithful: “*...we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven...*”...and our responsorial psalm: “*For with the LORD is kindness and with him is plenteous redemption and he will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.*”

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 89

Reading 1GN 3:9-15

After the man, Adam, had eaten of the tree,
the LORD God called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?"
He answered, "I heard you in the garden;
but I was afraid, because I was naked,
so I hid myself."

Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked?"

**You have eaten, then,
from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!"**

The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me—
she gave me fruit from the tree, and so I ate it."

The LORD God then asked the woman,
"Why did you do such a thing?"

The woman answered, "The serpent tricked me into it, so I ate it."

Then the LORD God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this, you shall be banned
from all the animals
and from all the wild creatures;
on your belly shall you crawl,
and dirt shall you eat
all the days of your life.

**I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike at your head,
while you strike at his heel."**

Responsorial Psalm PS 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

R. (7bc) **With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

**Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;
LORD, hear my voice!**

Let your ears be attentive
to my voice in supplication.

R. **With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,
LORD, who can stand?

But with you is forgiveness,
that you may be revered.

R. **With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

I trust in the LORD;
my soul trusts in his word.
More than sentinels wait for the dawn,
let Israel wait for the LORD.

R. **With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

For with the LORD is kindness
and with him is plenteous redemption
and he will redeem Israel
from all their iniquities.

R. **With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

Reading 22 COR 4:13–5:1

Brothers and sisters:

Since we have the same spirit of faith,
according to what is written, I *believed, therefore I spoke*,
we too believe and therefore we speak,

knowing that the one who raised the Lord Jesus
will raise us also with Jesus
and place us with you in his presence.

Everything indeed is for you,

so that the grace bestowed in abundance on more and more people
may cause the thanksgiving to overflow for the glory of God.

Therefore, we are not discouraged;

rather, although our outer self is wasting away,
our inner self is being renewed day by day.

For this momentary light affliction
is producing for us an eternal weight of glory
beyond all comparison,

as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen;
for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.

For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent,
should be destroyed,

we have a building from God,
a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

Alleluia JN 12:31B-32

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Now the ruler of the world will be driven out, says the Lord;
and when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel **MK 3:20-35**

Jesus came home with his disciples.
Again the crowd gathered,
making it impossible for them even to eat.
When his relatives heard of this they set out to seize him,
for they said, "He is out of his mind."
The scribes who had come from Jerusalem said,
"He is possessed by Beelzebul,"
and "By the prince of demons he drives out demons."

Summoning them, he began to speak to them in parables,
"How can Satan drive out Satan?
If a kingdom is divided against itself,
that kingdom cannot stand.
And if a house is divided against itself,
that house will not be able to stand.
And if Satan has risen up against himself
and is divided, he cannot stand;
that is the end of him.
But no one can enter a strong man's house to plunder his property
unless he first ties up the strong man.
Then he can plunder the house.
Amen, I say to you,
all sins and all blasphemies that people utter will be
forgiven them.
But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit
will never have forgiveness,
but is guilty of an everlasting sin."
For they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

His mother and his brothers arrived.
Standing outside they sent word to him and called him.
A crowd seated around him told him,
"Your mother and your brothers and your sisters
are outside asking for you."
But he said to them in reply,
"Who are my mother and my brothers?"
And looking around at those seated in the circle he said,
"Here are my mother and my brothers.
For whoever does the will of God
is my brother and sister and mother."