

10th Sunday of the Year homily B Cycle 6-10-18

Sometimes we learn more from the questions Jesus asked than from the answers he gives. His question in today's gospel is a good example. Jesus asks, "Who is my mother and brother and sister? Or we may ask the same question in another way: "How do we get close to God?"

In today's gospel Jesus, when visiting his home town, was expelling demons from possessed people.

Religious Leaders of the Jews objected,

- Contact with possessed people would make Jesus impure.
- Contact with dead people would also make him impure (example: story of the Good Samaritan)
- Contact with sinners would also make him impure,
 - Jesus had contact with prostitutes (example: story of woman caught in adultery)
 - His relationship with tax collectors (examples: having dinner with Matthew, the tax collector and his friends; befriend Zaccheus and eating with him).
 - Story of the prodigal son (turned his back on his father: "Die old man!")
- He ate with sinners.

And in case we think the way people have changed that much... (tell the story of how people were not comfortable coming to church building for community meetings).

If he cures people who are possessed, the religious leaders say Jesus is impure and must be also involved with the demons.

The religious leaders objected.

He defended himself. A house divided among itself cannot stand. A demon would never expel another demon.

Jesus was saying that being a sinner or even possessed by a demon does not mean you are excluded from coming close to God.

But the religious leaders were worried. People were coming to him. All kinds of people were coming to him. Then just who are the good people, the holy people, those who are close to God?

You might think it would be people in his family, his tribe who share his religious customs and values.

But it may not be so.

The people in today's gospel say to Jesus, "Your family, your mother, your brothers are outside. (Comment on them being outside.)"

He looked at those inside, in the house, who were hungry for the Word of life.

(comment on the 60 feet the distance from the altar to the last pew in church. I can look into the eyes of each person and they can see me.)

We coming to church to hear the word of life and see the Lord. You have to draw near!

But it is not simply hearing the word of God. Jesus says those who DO THE WILL OF GOD, is brother and sister and mother to me

And that is not only those we canonize as saints. Not only saints are mother and brother and sister to Jesus: Quote from Flannery O'Connor. *When the sun hits the trees a certain way, even the meanest of them sparkles.* Even the greatest sinners can reflect the glory of God.

I would like to end this homily with a reflection from the theologian and story teller, John Shea on just who does Jesus consider his brothers and sisters:

“There is a man in Rwanda who kept people alive during a genocide; a woman who held the hand of a dying man so tenderly he found peace; a grandmother who keeps in loving contact with the children her son abandoned; that same abandoning father helping a coworker in depression; the depressed coworker thanking a cleaning lady so profoundly that she cried. Everyone gets to belong to the Will of God at one time or another; and when we hear of another’s momentary belonging, we know the answer to Jesus’ question, “Who is mother and brother and sister to me?””