

10<sup>th</sup> June 2018 (10<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

Genesis 3:9-15; Psalm 129(130); 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35.

**Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother, my sister, my mother!**

Perhaps it is fair to say that today's gospel reading is a complex one! Today's reading is made up of two main themes: God's great forgiveness and the disciple's call to obey God's will. The first reading from the book of Genesis also invites us to reflect on the effect disobedience has on our relationship with God.

Jesus' relatives – his mother, brothers (and sisters) – were struggling to understand who Jesus really was. They saw Jesus always surrounded by crowds and doubted his sanity, they wanted to save him from the crowds. The Jerusalem authorities doubted his teaching and his healing ministry and challenged him. Jesus' answer can perhaps be simply summarised in saying that only those who abandon themselves in God's will can fully understand Jesus and his teachings!

Jesus knows that there is only one thing that counts in life, doing the will of God. This is why Jesus was born, the purpose of his teaching, and the reason why he died on the cross. At the garden of Gethsemane Jesus asks his Father to exempt him from going through his passion and death, but then submits to the Father's will. This is the attitude of the perfect son.

Jesus does not let his love and respect towards his natural family to interfere with his love of God. Perhaps one would have expected Jesus to stop his teaching and go out to greet his mother and relatives; instead he continues teaching. The true family of Jesus are those who, like him, are ready to submit to the will of the Father. Obeying God's will makes one a brother and a sister of Jesus, a son of God! This is not an easy option. The Genesis story tells us that our own will often gets in the way and we are tempted to devise our own ways. Like Jesus our prayer should always be: your will be done here on earth as it is already in heaven!

As a good and loving parent, God is always ready to forgive our sins as long as we are willing to recognise him as our God and Father. The problem with the Jerusalem authorities was that were not ready to listen to Jesus' teachings, but came to criticise and condemn him accusing him of blasphemy. These scribes claimed that the works Jesus was carrying out, by the power of God's Holy Spirit, were actually the works of Satan himself! If one denies God the power to forgive and to heal, then one cannot benefit from God's healing; if one blasphemes against the Holy Spirit one cannot be forgiven!

Through our Baptism we are sons and daughters of God, sisters and brothers of Jesus. We are called and invited to participate in the life of God and enjoy his forgiving and healing powers. In return Jesus invites us to trust in God and accept God's will in our life. This is not easy, it led Jesus to his cross. Even for us, discipleship is not easy. Like Jesus we need to learn to accept our own crosses as God's will for us, trusting that after the pain and suffering, we too, like Jesus, will enjoy the resurrection.

Fr Mario