

Monday's Gospel: United to the Root, to Jesus

Gospel for Monday in the 3rd Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 3:22-30*)

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” And Jesus called them to him, and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast 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, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man; then indeed he may plunder his house.

“Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— for they had said, He has an unclean spirit.”

Commentary

In today's Gospel we are helped to reflect on the dispositions of our own heart. The scribes have seen the great miracles worked by Jesus and

heard his teachings. Even so, they accuse him of working these wonders through the power of Satan. Their attitude shows that they put themselves above our Lord. We don't know exactly why they reject him, but we can intuit it. Jesus' message is not what they expected; they prefer to remain attached to their own teachings and plans. And this leads them to reject God.

You and I, at times, can also act like the scribes. Maybe not with an outright rejection, but by denying his teachings interiorly. We may think that a specific teaching of the Church is too harsh and we prefer to hold onto our own opinions. Or we may not want to do something that God is asking of us and we prefer to cling to a solution that we find more pleasant, but that is not what God wants.

The Christian's path is to follow Christ. Sometimes the road is arduous, but that is where our happiness lies. Doing what God wants, uniting myself to his will and accepting it even if it is hard, is the path of love.

We are in the octave for Christian unity. To attain the unity of Christians, we first need to be closely united to the root, to Jesus. And the way to do so is through prayer, where we discover God's will for us. Pope Francis, in an audience on August 27, 2014, said: "God wants us to develop the capacity to welcome, to forgive and to love each other, to be ever more like Him, who is communion and love."

We cannot save ourselves; we need God's grace. If we reject God's help and turn our back on his infinite love, we will never be able to achieve holiness. For salvation is not a

reward we deserve because of a lifetime of struggle; rather it is an undeserved gift that God grants to those who truly want to love Him. If one rejects the help of the Holy Spirit, he rejects this gift of God that is his own salvation.

Saint Josemaría frequently prayed this aspiration: “*Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam*,” asking that all Christians may be united with the same will, the same heart, the same Spirit. Let us always seek to be closely united to God through prayer. One way to help achieve this unity is to pray each day for the Pope and the Church.

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the-root-to-jesus/ (02/14/2026)