

Tuesday's Gospel: DNA of God's Children

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

Gospel (*Mk 3:31-35*)

And his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting about him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you.”

And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking around on those who sat about him,

he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Commentary

The evangelist Saint Mark makes it very clear how widely Jesus' fame was spreading: “people came to him from every quarter” (1:45); “a great multitude, hearing all that he did, came to him” (3:8). So many came that Jesus found it hard to deal with all those people: “all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him” (3:10); “the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat” (3:20). But our Lord did not reject anyone; he welcomed everyone, wherever they came from: from Galilee and Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, and even

from beyond the Jordan and from Tyre and Sidon (cf. 3:7). So we can understand why, with such a large crowd “sitting around him” (v. 31), it wasn’t easy to get close to him, and why even his mother and close relatives had to send him a message that they wanted to speak with him.

Jesus takes advantage of this request to offer his listeners a consoling teaching: “those who sat about him” (v. 34) are the ones who will form the new family of God’s children, in the future Church. Those who fulfill the will of God (whose Son is Jesus himself, as even the unclean spirits acknowledge) are his brothers, sisters, and mother. Here our Lord makes clear the identity of those who follow him, of Christians: children who want to identify themselves with the will of their Father. And this continues to be the DNA of any disciple of Jesus, of any son or daughter in his Church: the

deep and internalized desire to do only what God wants.

Hence when Jesus looks at the crowd around him (v. 34), he doesn't see people who are there out of duty, because they feel obligated or have no other option. For our Lord welcomes everyone who wants to hear him, everyone who wants to touch him. Following our Lord, obeying God the Father, becoming part of his new family is, above all, a free and personal response. And this is true especially of his mother. Our Lady is the first one who said yes, who decided to make her life a permanent yes. Mary is the one who, with her free and personal decision, is the example for how all future Christians should respond to God's will. And with her *fiat*, "let it be done unto me" (cf. *Lk* 1:38), she enables us to form part of her own family and gives us her Son and all the gifts he brings: "Mother, Oh Mother! With

that word of yours – fiat, ‘be it done’ – you have made us brothers of God and heirs to his Glory. Blessed art thou!" (*The Way*, 512).

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