

Gospel Reflection
Mark 3:20-35

“If a kingdom is divided against itself, it cannot stand.”

Playing Hide and Seek is a fun game, but it isn't how we should live. We were meant to be in communion with God and with each other. Communion, not division, is our purpose.

In the beginning, Satan had a desire to be something that he was not. He wanted to be like God. He even encouraged Adam and Eve to be like God. This was his great Fall and our Original Sin. But, Christ, the new Adam, came to restore us, to draw us out of hiding, and to walk with us in Paradise.

There is a great freedom in knowing that God loves us, redeems us, and desires to be with us. In fact, he wants to be with us now. Not when we die. But, now. He calls us out of darkness and into his wonderful light.

When children play Hide and Seek, the game eventually comes to an end. Usually, someone calls out, “Ollie ollie oxen free” (originally “All ye out, come in, free). Christ also calls us out of hiding and shame: “All ye come out of hiding and come into my heavenly kingdom. You're free!”

Shared with the permission of Bishop John Dolan,
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10th Sunday in Ordinary Time



There are powerful forces working toward keeping us from experiencing union with God and harmony with others. Our enemy is a cunning, baffling, and powerful foe that uses subtle deceptions to divide us. Over time, we develop inclinations toward fear and resentment that disrupt our freedom and get in the way of authentic trust in the Lord. We believe we are doing good because we've met low, self-imposed standards for our spiritual life that protect our ego and shield us from truly surrendering.

Therefore, our recovery must go deeper than simply removing the source of our addiction from our lives. We are to be transformed and spiritual awoken to the Good News: Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.

Our first reading this week takes us back to the beginning of time. We hear from the third chapter of Genesis:

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."

Notice the reaction of Adam and Eve after they've given into original sin. Isolation, self-pity, finger-pointing, and shame were a few natural responses exhibited then, and may describe our propensity to disengage from God after caving to sin and addiction in our lives today.

The sacraments of the Catholic Church and the twelve steps of recovery uncover our deeply-rooted tendencies and provide healing and wholeness to our spiritual journey. Are we reaching for the fruit of our own self-will or are we relying upon daily renewal and guidance from our Lord?

Humanity found salvation from the transgressions of Adam and Eve through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We surrender ourselves to the same God—who sacrificed his life so that we may experience eternal redemption—by accepting the gift and identity that He has freely given us. Our dark past can serve as a treasured asset if it propels us to seek the will of God and proclaim the message of hope to those that still suffer.

God has plans for communal recovery for his people, as Saint Paul writes in his second letter to the Corinthians:

Since we have the same spirit of faith, 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.