

Tuesday of the Third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 3:31-35): The mother of Jesus and his brothers arrived at the house. Standing outside they sent word to him and called him. A crowd seated around him told him, “Your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside asking for you.” But he said to them in reply, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

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

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Today, we find Jesus surrounded by a crowd of people in both a very concrete and compromising scene. Jesus' closer relatives had arrived from Nazareth and Capernaum. But, seeing so many people around, they chose to wait outside and send for Him instead. The crowd tells Him: “Your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside asking for you.” But he said to them in reply, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” (Mk 3:31).

Jesus' answer is by no means a rejection towards His relatives. Jesus just moved away from them to follow the divine call and now, He also means that, intimately, He has given them up too: not because of lack of feelings or scorn of His family ties, but because He completely belongs to God the Father. Jesus Christ actually lived what He precisely expects from His disciples.

Jesus has chosen a spiritual family instead of His earthly one. He looks over the heads of those sitting next to Him and says: “And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mk 3:34-35). In other places of His Gospel, Saint Mark mentions Jesus glancing around too.

Is Jesus trying to tell us His only relatives are those who listen to Him attentively? Of course not! His relatives are not those who listen to Him but those who listen to and abide by God's will: it is those who are His brother, His sister, His mother...

Jesus is exhorting those sitting there —and everybody else— to enter their hearts in spiritual communion with Him by abiding with the Divine Will. At the same time, however, He also praises His mother, the Virgin Mary, who is always blessed for having believed.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Her nearness as a Mother would have been of no profit to Mary, had she not borne Christ in her heart after a more blessed manner than in her flesh.” (Saint Augustine).

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“‘My soul magnifies the Lord’ (Lk 1:46). In these words Mary expresses her whole programme of life: not setting herself at the centre, but leaving space for God; only then does goodness enter the world.” (Benedict XVI).

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“‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word’ (Lk 1:37-38). Thus, giving her consent to God's word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus. Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly (...), she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 494)