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 contemplate Jesus—in a very specific and, at the same time, compromising scene—surrounded by a crowd of people from the town. Jesus' closest relatives have arrived from Nazareth to Capernaum. But given the size of the crowd, they remain outside and send for him. They say to him, "Your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside asking for you" (Mark 3:32).

In Jesus' response, as we will see, there is no hint of rejection of his relatives. Jesus had distanced himself from them to follow the divine call, and now he shows that he has also inwardly renounced them: not out of cold-heartedness or contempt for family ties, but because he belongs completely to God the Father. Jesus Christ has personally accomplished in himself what He rightly asks of his disciples.

Instead of his earthly family, Jesus has chosen a spiritual family. He looks at the people sitting around him and says, “Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:34-35). Saint Mark, in other parts of his Gospel, recounts other instances of Jesus looking around at those present.

Does Jesus mean to tell us that only those who listen attentively to his word are his relatives? No! His relatives are not those who merely listen to his word, but those who listen to and do the will of God: these are his brother, his sister, and his mother.

What Jesus is doing is an exhortation to those sitting there—and to all—to enter into communion with Him by fulfilling the divine will. But, at the same time, we see in his words praise for his mother, Mary, the ever blessed one for having believed.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “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).

- “`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).

- “‘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, № 494)