

**TENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God always faithful,
may we never speak evil
of what is good.
Put in our hearts
a love for everything
that is right and true,
so that through us,
other people
may come to know
and love Jesus, your Son,
who lives with you
and the Holy Spirit
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The focus of our readings for today is the power of Jesus over evil. The passage from Genesis is the story of a man and woman who accepted the temptation of disobeying God and thus introduced the continuing struggle between humankind and evil. But the story ends with God's promise that in the struggle, humankind, not evil, will prevail.

The Gospel focuses on the power of Jesus to cast out evil spirits. Both readings tell us that evil exists but that it is subject to divine power.

FIRST READING: Genesis 3:9-15

This is a reading from the first book of Genesis.

[After Adam had eaten some fruit from the tree
in the middle of the garden,]
God called to him and asked,

“Where are you?”

Adam said,

“I heard you coming through the garden,
but I was afraid.
I hid from you because I was naked.”

God said to Adam,

“But who told you that you were naked?
You must have eaten the fruit
that I told you not to eat!”

Adam said,

“The woman that you put here with me
gave me some and I ate it.”

God asked Eve,

“Why did you do that?”

Eve said,

“The serpent tricked me so I ate it.”

[Then God said to the serpent,

“Because you did this, you will be separated
from all the other animals.
You will crawl around on your stomach
and eat dirt for the rest of your life.
I am going to make you and the woman enemies.
The child who will be born of the woman
will step on your head
and you will bite the heel of his foot.”]

This is the Word of God.

[] Reader may omit text that appears in brackets.

RESPONSE: Psalm 130

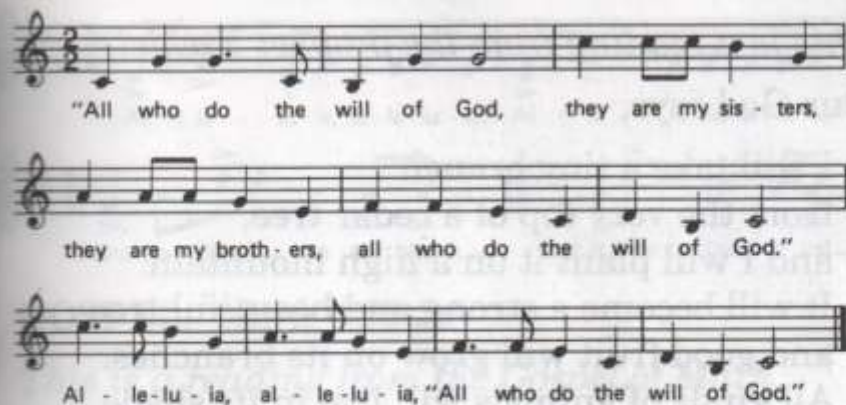
RESPONSE:

Lis - ten to my prayer, I trust in you my God. God.

VERSES:

1. In my trou - ble hear my cry, hear my cry to you for help.
2. My soul hopes in you my God. You have saved me in your love.
3. My soul waits for you my God like the night that waits for day.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



"All who do the will of God, they are my sis - ters,
they are my broth - ers, all who do the will of God."
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, "All who do the will of God."

GOSPEL: *Mark 3:20-23a, 28-30, 31-34*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.

When Jesus was home, many people gathered to listen to him teach. The crowd was so big that Jesus and his disciples couldn't even take time to eat.

Some of the teachers of the law were there from Jerusalem. They were talking about Jesus sending evil spirits out of people. They said,

"He has the chief devil, Beelzebul, living inside of him. That's where he gets the power to drive evil spirits out of others."

So Jesus called the people together and said to them,

"I tell you honestly, God will forgive all sins. But if you say evil things against the Holy Spirit, you will not be forgiven. He told them this because they said the Spirit of Jesus was evil."

[Then his mother and brothers came, and they asked someone to go inside and say to Jesus,

"Your mother and your brothers are outside waiting for you."

Then Jesus looked at the people who were sitting there listening to him and he said,

"These people here are also my mother and my brothers and sisters, because my brothers and sisters and mother are people who do what God wants them to do."]

This is the Good News of the Lord.

[] Reader may omit text that appears in brackets.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

The point of "the fall" section of the creation story is that indeed evil exists and that God did not intend for things to be this way. The authors of this story, like ourselves, experienced the effects of evil in the world and sought an explanation for it. It was clear to them that God created all things good (hence the earlier part of the creation story: "and God saw that it was good.") So, just as clearly, it was through the choice of human beings that sin entered the world.

Hence our passage for today. It will not serve the children particularly well to dwell on the details of the story. Rather, we will concentrate on the heart of the matter, our freedom of choice.

Help the children see that people are not evil. All people are created in the image of God. But we are created with free will and therefore can choose good or evil. God does not stop us from doing evil because God respects our freedom.

Ask the children if they see evil in the world. Help them focus on the evil and not on the persons.

Ask them if they think evil deeds can be avoided? How? Help them see that the story in Genesis is an example of how many people can choose to disobey God. And the story tells us how many people act when they do what they know is wrong: they hide, they blame others.

But God always promises to help us. God sent Jesus to help us and Jesus has power over sin and evil. Jesus calls us to choose to do good and not evil and he gives us the strength we need to do that. A note of caution: while we want to help children realize that they have the freedom to choose, and while they certainly, even at a young age, can choose to do things that are wrong, they do not participate in those choices. These readings, far from engendering guilt in little children, can help in their formation of making good choices. It is the matter of "choice," not evil, that we must stress with them.

Your discussion with them might focus on the choices they can and do make in their everyday lives.