

10th Sunday per Annum - B
Genesis 3:9-15;
II Corinthians 4:13 - 5 :1;
Mark 3:20-25
Little Flower - 6/9/24

My Brothers and Sisters,

Genesis 3 tells the story of the original sin. Today's readings tell the story of the effects of the original sin, effects that continue today. After they sinned, Adam and Eve hid because they realized that they were naked. According to Genesis 2, prior to their sin, they were naked but felt no shame in front of each other. In other words, sin introduced vulnerability into the world. When there was no sin, there was no vulnerability, and they could be completely open with each other and trust each other completely.

Another effect of the original sin was evident in their conversation with God. When God asked Adam why he ate the forbidden fruit, he blamed Eve. When God asked Eve why she ate the forbidden fruit, she blamed the serpent. One of the consequences of original sin was that neither was willing to accept responsibility for his or her action. Failure to take responsibility was the second effect of the original sin. Today, for example, so many people play the blame game, blaming their parents, society, or injustice for all their problems instead of taking responsibility and working to change themselves.

Today's Gospel also addresses the consequences of original sin. Jesus states that a house or a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. A major consequence of original sin is alienation from God, others, the world, and ourselves.

If we are at all aware of what is going on around us, we know how alienated we are. Many people have rejected God or at least forgotten about God. Climate change, however you explain it, is having a major impact on the world now. So many people are suffering from mental and emotional illnesses and/or one or more addictions. For example, so many people, especially young people, are dying from drug overdoses, and we seem powerless to stop the spread of drugs.

Right now, however, I think our primary concern should be all the divisions among people. Right now there is almost a chasm between the right and the left in our country. Both sides of the political divide foment division. In every area of the world, there are wars or threats of war. Although the biggest are the wars between Israel and Hamas and between Russia and Ukraine, there are a large number of smaller wars, especially across the face of Africa. China is threatening to invade Taiwan.

From my perspective, there is more division in the Catholic Church in the United States now than at any other time in my life. I am not sure how to describe the division. Some would describe it as pro-Pope Francis or anti-Pope Francis. Others might describe the divisions in terms of traditional or progressive Catholics. Again, because of social media, these are becoming more extreme. Pope Francis sees synodality as the best possible response to conditions in the Church today. As he has said, synodality is about listening not just to each other but, more importantly, listening to the Holy Spirit.

Today's second reading addresses the most important consequence of original sin, dying and death. St. Paul refers to his outer self wasting away. However, at the end of the passage, he writes that even if our earthly dwelling, our body, is destroyed, we have an eternal dwelling place from God in heaven.

My brothers and sisters, today I focused on original sin and its consequences because I believe today there are many people who do not believe in original sin and its ongoing effects in our life and world. However, humankind had reason for hope from the beginning. At the end of the first reading, almost immediately after the original sin, God promised a savior: "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.*" This is one of the most well-known passages of the Old Testament. It is called the Proto-Evangelium or First Gospel or First Good News.