

## Homily 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Fr John the Baptist, visiting priest

I am Fr. John the Baptist. That is my name. I've been here in Oklahoma for 12 years. And I've been a Chaplain at Mercy hospital for 3 years. Deacon Rich, your deacon here, is my boss. So if pastor told me to assist here, if I can do it, I said with the time going, I will be able to assist only very briefly, because at 11 I have Mass at the Convent of the nuns at Mercy Hospital. And then I go to work until 4 or 5 there, and then I go back home.

So I'm from Africa, Uganda. If you know the story of Idi Amin, that man who killed so many people, you know where I am coming from. But it is a better place now, I think.

Today is the 10th Sunday of year B. Our theme "Jesus and the evil spirit." Two incredible enemies. The first reading describes with the help of the image the fight going in the world between the good and the evil. Who are we? The Bible from the very first chapters, assures us that someone born of a woman will defeat the evil spirit. The Gospel tells us of Jesus, the one capable of winning against evil and of tying up the strong man who is the devil. The second reading provides us with a new picture of our life and of the world.

We are pilgrims on the move toward God every day. We achieve full life when the evil in each one of us is completely defeated. The deeds and the teaching of Jesus we look on as proof. And it will come by all of us first.

In this gospel we see how Jesus is misunderstood. Namely by His family, who think that He is out of His mind. By the scribes and the pharisees who accuse Him of being possessed by Beelzebub, the master of the evil spirits. In the midst of misunderstanding or opposition, Jesus shows who the real members of His family are, and what conditions must be met if we wish to be members of his family in faith. Is Jesus out of His mind?

Until this point in the gospel we have been following, we have seen how Jesus is concerned for the people. In His scale of value, He values people more than the Sabbath. His family wants to protect Him from the attacks He has to endure from the religious leaders of His time. They want to intervene before it is too late – to make Him safe. Their intention was good, but Jesus shows that for Him, and for His disciples, there has come a new more important reality, that is closer than familial relationship, a new family more important than traditional family ties and obligations.

The relative who are outside, know Jesus very well. They have grown up with Him since his childhood. But when they hear him say things that demand conversion, a change of mentality, they think that He is out of His mind. These relatives are those Christians who belong physically to the family of Jesus, and those whose names appear in the parish records. They are sure they know they are eating well, but as soon as they hear things they judge contrary to

common sense they decide to step out away from the church and they refuse to enter even the house of God. Not even on Sundays they never appear because they look for more.

Jesus with the power of God, heals and liberates people who are suffering. We are all people suffering. We are all people on a journey towards Him. But He is all ready to liberate us and to protect us. But the religious leaders represented by the Scribes, intentionally attributed to the evil one that whom they know comes from God. Those who accuse Jesus of being influenced by Beelzebub, are consciously confused, and are confusing each and every person.

God can forgive only those who accept their need of forgiveness. Jesus presents his true family as composed of those who listen to the word of God and who put it into practice. As we have done today. The relationship with Jesus acquires a new dimension. God based, not blood based. Doing the will of God is what gives unity and meaning to the community of believers. In the words of Jesus, "It is not those who say 'Lord, Lord' who are part of the family, but those who do the will of the Father in Heaven." To be a disciple is to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to His word, as you have done, and to live it courageously. Because each day we are coming closer to Him, and He is ready to wait for us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.