

## Evangelization is Awkward

(Even with Family and Friends)

Tenth Week of Ordinary Time – Mark 3:20-35 – June 10, 2018

A few years ago I heard Dr. Matt Halbach, author of the book, *Becoming a Parish of Mercy*, speak on the topic of evangelization and accompaniment. At the conclusion of his talk Matt said, “Let’s be honest, evangelization is awkward.” The entire crowd all laughed (nervously) because it is so true. Most people don’t like to talk about God or Jesus with friends or family. It can be a very taboo topic with people we love. It’s even more difficult with people we don’t know.

The gospel this week gives us some insight into the truth about this difficulty. Jesus makes no excuses about Christian discipleship. He has been out among the people curing and healing those in need. He has shown mercy and forgiveness to those who are on the fringes of society. Jesus has sent the Twelve out on mission to do as he has done. Now he has returned home to anger and animosity from both family and the religious authority.

Jesus’ own family struggles with his behavior and message. **“When his relatives heard of this they set out to seize him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.” The scribes who had come from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “By the prince of demons he drives out demons.”** The complaints that come from both family and the religious elite are saying that Jesus is either crazy or possessed.

Jesus’ response is harsh. **“How can Satan drive out Satan?” If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.”** The Good News about Jesus Christ is hard to hear. The Good News is challenging. The Good News is life changing. The Good News is about doing the will of God, not our own will. The Good News calls all of us to mercy and mission, not to the one-upmanship and personal success that has been the hallmark of human existence from the beginning of time. The Good News is about sharing this message of love and forgiveness that is for everyone. This is where discipleship and evangelization gets demanding.

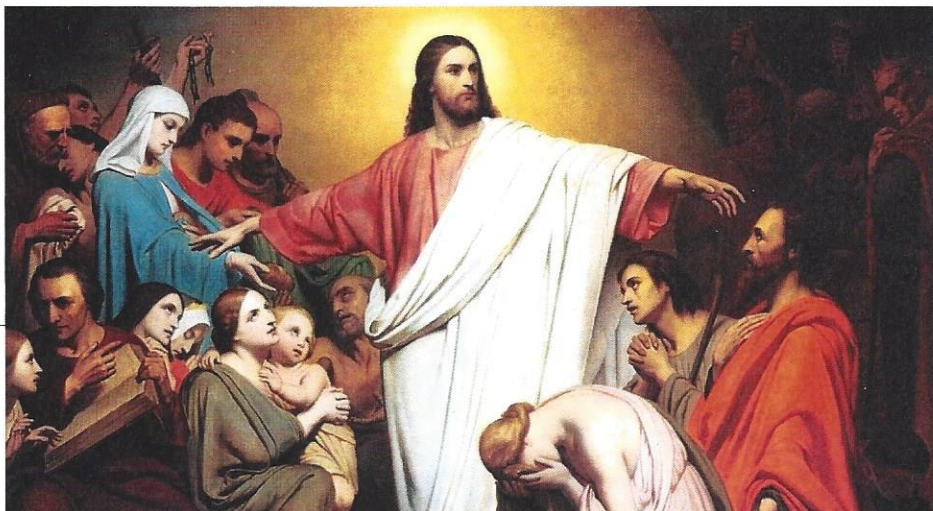
I find it can be very easy to sit within a room of people who all believe the same thing and proclaim what I believe. It is more difficult to evangelize in a hostile crowd (or family). I truly find that the most difficult atmosphere to proclaim the Good News is one of apathy. The Good News is still a tough sell no matter where you are in your life or who you might be speaking to about Jesus Christ and his mission. To be honest, sometimes I find it easier to just be quiet. Like Matt Halbach’s comment, I find evangelization to be very awkward.

As we reflect on this difficult gospel on this Tenth Week of Ordinary Time, I can say that I am one of the many broken disciples that look to Jesus as my Savior and the Holy Spirit as the driving grace behind any good that I do in God’s name. I just pray that my “awkward” attempts might bring one or two others closer to Christ.

Blessings!

  
Sue Schettler

June 10, 2018



“Anyone who  
does God’s will  
is my brother  
and sister  
and mother.”

--Jesus  
Mark 3:35 (NLT)

### Readings for the Week of June 10, 2018

Sunday: Gn 3:9-15/Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8  
[7bc]/2 Cor 4:13--5:1/Mk 3:20-35

Monday: Acts 11:21b-26; 13:1-3/Ps 98:1, 2-  
3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6 [cf. 2b]/Mt 5:1-12

Tuesday: 1 Kgs 17:7-16/Ps 4:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8 [7a]/Mt 5:13-16

Wednesday: 1 Kgs 18:20-39/Ps 16:1b-2ab, 4, 5ab and 8, 11  
[1b]/Mt 5:17-19

Thursday: 1 Kgs 18:41-46/Ps 65:10, 11, 12-13 [2a]/Mt 5:20-  
26

Friday: 1 Kgs 19:9a, 11-16/Ps 27:7-8a, 8b-9abc, 13-14 [8b]/  
Mt 5:27-32

Saturday: 1 Kgs 19:19-21/Ps 16:1b-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10 [cf.  
5a]/Mt 5:33-37

Next Sunday: Ez 17:22-24/Ps 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16 [cf. 2a]/2  
Cor 5:6-10/Mk 4:26-34

