

**10th Sunday of the Year (B)**

**June 10, 2018**

**Genesis 3:9-15**

**Psalm 130**

**2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1**

**Mark 3:20-35**

I believe most of you are familiar with the concept, mandorla. I have mentioned it quite often over the past ten years. This Italian word means almond. The almond shape is the design of our church building, this worship space. The almond shape is the design of the baptismal font and, if you visit our Columbarium Garden, the almond shape is the space where we gather to pray our final prayers for our loved ones. This image or concept originates in many works of art and we became familiar with it as we searched for a design for this building. In art it can be quite pronounced and obvious or rather subtle, maybe just a slight line on either of an image of Christ or one of the saints. The almond shape is where two circles overlap, the human and the divine. This building, this font of baptism, the place of prayer in our Columbarium Garden, is the place where the human and the divine come together. Throughout our life's journey, we anticipate coming closer to God and moving toward that moment when we will be one with God!

Within the sacred word today we see the struggle of the human and the divine, beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. We see the struggle between the religious leaders and Jesus, the struggle to understand Jesus and the challenging idea of the greater family of God. What is it that keeps the human and the divine from coming together and becoming one? There is a natural tendency to reach out and be one with God, our creator, but we also want a certain autonomy, to be our own person. Our lives are filled with ambiguities, a sort of split within ourselves, a sense of the loss of harmony and integrity. This is the struggle between good and evil, light and darkness. I think Paul's reference in the second lesson to the outer self and the inner self, is a reference to the human and the divine, to what is passing away and what is growing stronger, what is transitory and what is eternal. Again, this journey of earthly life is the movement toward God, entering fully into the presence and the life of God.



What family is it that does not struggle with a son or daughter, brother or sister, who steps outside the box and begins to act in a different or strange way. We huddle together with our concern and attempt to intervene. Some times it works but often time it does not work. Jesus has created quite a stir and he has quite a following of people. The family is quite concerned. Perhaps the reference to Jesus being “possessed by Beelzebul” was way too much, even embarrassing to the family. He has become an exorcist, and a healer who touches women, he lays hands on lepers, eats with known sinners, proclaims forgiveness, disregards pious fasting practices, and provokes the wrath of religious authorities by openly violating Sabbath restrictions.

**All of this he does while preaching repentance and announcing that the kingdom of God is at hand.**

**Jesus takes on the accusations of the religious leaders and he very much responds out of character when he says there is an unforgivable sin, and that is the sin against the Holy Spirit. This is the refusal to acknowledge that God is at work in what gives life, what heals life, and what sets human beings free. From the beginning of Mark's gospel account, Jesus is possessed by the Spirit who descended on him at his baptism and drove him into the desert experience of being intimate with God. This accusation on the part of the scribes was malicious and vindictive. The scribes see goodness as evil and this is a barrier that keeps them from God who is understanding and forgiving.**

**The family of Jesus, including his mother, Mary, did not understand. They were outside requesting that Jesus come out to them. Jesus' response was to look around the circle of those in his company and he names those folks as his brother, his sister, his mother. This is only the second place in Mark's gospel where Mary is mentioned, perhaps an insight into the truth that Mary had to suffer. Her family ties with Jesus would be replaced with a new family and household of believers.**

**We come here, into this space, because we are so very human. We come here to touch and be touched by God and to learn the way and the will of God.**