

Missionary Commentary

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 9, 2024

Sunday Readings

Genesis 3:9-15

Psalm 130:1-8

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

Mark 3:20-35

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Living God's Truth in Love

As we hear today's first reading from the book of Genesis many images and ideas spontaneously emerge: paradise, first parents, a fruit-tree, the serpent or snake, deception and trickery, human weakness and disobedience, the fall into sin. However, we also recall God's loving creation of Adam and Eve, his desire for their happiness, God's fidelity and compassion. We hear God's promise of a Savior as he predicts enmity between Satan and the offspring of Eve. This prediction in Genesis has long been viewed as the first hint of Christ's ultimate victory over Satan.

In Christian theology, the statement in Genesis 3:15 that the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent's head is referred to as the *protoevangelium*, the "first gospel." This is taken to mean that the offspring of Mary, Christ, will ultimately defeat the Serpent, the Devil. Several early Church fathers, such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, view this passage as the first messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. This interpretation provides the background why we often see many paintings and statutes of Mother Mary crushing the serpent under her feet.

A Fresh Pastoral Insight. Pope Francis has taken some aspects of this passage from Genesis about the events in the garden of paradise and given us a new, insightful, contemporary interpretation. Francis focuses on the "conversation" that Eve has with the serpent; the Pope's reflections are found in his message for the 2018 World Communications Day, entitled: "'The Truth will set you free' (Jn 8:32): Fake News and Journalism for Peace." Francis asserts that "the strategy employed by the 'crafty serpent' in the Book of Genesis ... created **the first fake news**." The deceptive words of the serpent, the devil, called the "Father of Lies" (Jn 8:44), tricks Eve and results in "countless other evils committed against God, neighbor, society and creation."

Pope Francis sees the deceptive arguments of the devil as subverting God's plan. "Communication is part of God's plan for us and an essential way to experience fellowship. Made in the image and likeness of our Creator, we are able to express and share all that is true, good, and beautiful.... When we are faithful to God's plan,

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communication becomes an effective expression of our responsible search for truth and our pursuit of goodness.”

Difficult Challenges. Pope Francis has given us an important insight from the book of Genesis on the very current topic of “fake news.” He challenges us to be truthful in all aspects of our lives as a means of countering falsehoods and “half-truths.” We must not become purveyors of “fake news” by lies or gossip (which Pope Francis calls “terrorism”). He asks us to trust Jesus who proclaims: “I am the truth” (Jn 14:6) and who also asserts: “The truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32). We are invited to be authentic “Good News” Christians in our very challenging times!

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

Genesis 3:9-15 — Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, shows how God prepared for our savior, Jesus; Genesis hints at Christ’s victory over Satan.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 130:1-8 — This psalm, a prayer for forgiveness of sin, manifests God’s compassion and mercy.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 — Saint Paul, on his Third Missionary Journey, defends his sincere motives in preaching the Gospel to the Corinthians.

Gospel

Mark 3:20-35 — The Gospel of Mark often shows the authentic humanity of Jesus; here his family wonders if he had become unbalanced or possessed. Note that Jesus invites us to become his family members.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James Kroeger, who recently published [A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis: Exploring Twelve Pivotal Documents](#) (Faith Alive Books — 2024)

Please pray for the missions.
May God bless you in all the ways you Go Forth...



As the Father has sent me, so I send you.
JOHN 20:21

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