**Deacon Steve’s Reflection on the Sunday Readings**

**June 10, 2018 – 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Genesis 3: 9-15 Psalm 130: 1-8**

**2 Corinthians 4: 13 – 5:1 Mark 3: 20-35**

Although the Easter Season concluded with the Solemnity of Pentecost, this is the first Sunday when we see the priest and deacon return to the familiar green vestments worn during Ordinary Time. The term Ordinary Time frequently connotes a time relatively unimportant in the liturgical year; however, nothing can be further from the truth. Ordinary Time, although holding none of the important solemnities of other seasons (e.g. Christmas, Easter, etc.), is nonetheless a time of deep spiritual significance, where the Liturgy of the Word is devoted to the important teachings and events in the life of Christ. The word “Ordinary” denotes the number (remember the term “ordinal numbers”) of Sundays and corresponding weekdays, which are not superseded by specific feasts (e.g. The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist later this month). The season is the longest and continues until the beginning of Advent. As I write these words on our backyard deck, I appreciate the lush green of the lawn and trees – life in full abundance (albeit in the case of weeds, perhaps a bit too abundant).

Today’s readings address both the fall of man in the Garden of Eden and the salvific mission of Christ to restore humanity to a place in the Heavenly Kingdom. In the first reading from the Book of Genesis, God confronted Adam and Eve, who had disobeyed the LORD by eating from the fruit of the tree, and were hiding in fear of Him. Although they and their descendants were banished from the Garden, the LORD did not abandon his people. As revealed throughout the Old Testament, God continually reached out to His people in faithful covenant until, in the fullness of time, He sent His Son to fulfill His promise.

In the reading of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus responded to those who claimed that he was possessed by the Devil. Jesus told them: *“How can Satan drive out Satan? IF a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.”* Jesus told his followers of the importance of discipleship, even above that of family and community. He said to them: *“Who are my mother and my brothers? . . . . Here are my mother and brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”*

The way to salvation is through Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are his disciples when we accept him and bear witness to him in our words and deeds and within the depths of our hearts. Without him, we remain adrift in a world subject to the vagaries of human desires and experiences. Through Christ, we become one with God, mindful of His Will. Offering ourselves to life in the Holy Spirit, we die in the flesh, but live in the grace of eternity. As Saint Paul wrote in his Second Letter to the Corinthians: *“If our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.”*

As we continue throughout *Ordinary Time*, let us devote ourselves extraordinarily in service to Our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we might remain faithful disciples and bear witness to the Gospel to all whom we encounter in our lives.

Deacon Steven K. Szmutko