

June 10, 2018 10th Sunday in ordinary time

The first reading comes from the book of Genesis chapter 3 which is a very important chapter in our Bible. We start off with God asking Adam, "Where are you?" "Now does God not know everything? Yes, he does. But God calls us and Adam and he says where are you because when we sin we pull away from God we try and hide from God, subconsciously or consciously. God is saying where are you, to try and get his attention and bring him back. Adam answers, "I hid myself because I'm naked." Prior to that there was no recollection or knowledge or embarrassment about being naked. Now all of a sudden he's found out about it. It's like a two-year-old or a little one-year-old getting out of the bath and running through the house naked. He doesn't care, it doesn't matter. But then when you get up to teenage years, oh boy, forget that, you've got to cover yourself up all the way hopefully. Can't be different. Anyway. God said, "Who told you you were naked?" Adam says, "I confess that I have eaten the fruit of the tree that you told me not to." Ah ha! But he didn't stop there, he wanted to deflect the blame. What happens when people are accused? "It's not my fault, what about them." Everybody in prison is innocent, that's what they say, but there's a lot of innocent people in prison. But he deflects, "She made me do it!" Who had the greater sin, Eve for eating the apple and giving it to Adam or Adam for pointing the blame? We will have to ask God that question later on, because I don't know. We still have deflection; we don't want to take responsibility for ourselves. And then God gives us the punishment, He curses the snake. The most important verse is the last one because that is the promise of the Savior to come.

This first reading is about obedience, what happens when disobedience happens. Because of disobedience we became slaves, slaves to suffering in pain, slaves to concupiscence. Concupiscence means we are drawn to immorality and bad things. We are naturally drawn that way because of the sin of Adam and Eve and we're slaves to Satan, the prince of this world. We became slaves because of disobedience but the last words of Genesis 3:15, where God says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between her offspring and yours, he will strike your head while you strike his heel." This is a prophecy about our Blessed Mother and Jesus. Because of the disobedience of Adam, God sent Jesus to be obedient. Obedience is not something we like to talk about. Obedience was taken out of the marriage vows about 40 some years ago. Some bishop or priest or somebody said, "Oh that's so oppressive, how can we make them obedient to each other. Well it wasn't, "be my slave", it wasn't "get down and do what I tell you." The crux of the marriage is to get each other to heaven. And to be obedient when you're falling away from God, your spouse says, "Hey, you're messing up, go to confession. To be obedient, that was the obedience. There is only one place in the church that we kept obedience, priests to Bishops. The bishops always remind us, "Well, you took a vow of obedience." We really didn't, we took a promise but they say vow. There is a difference. They're always lording this over us, because of their position. I learned in seminary, 1/3 of the code of canon law is for the protection of pastors, not bishops. They don't like to hear that. Then they come along and they say, "Well if you don't do this, I'm going to remove you from the parish." If I am obedient, yes you can, if I'm disobedient, it can take two years for the legal process to kick me out of the parish. Can you imagine. Then of course I wouldn't get a salary, retirement, and all that good stuff. So obedience is still in holy orders. Obedience is not very popular because it's associated in this country with slavery and yet we are wrong. Obedience is freedom disobedience is slavery. And then once again we see in the gospel another thing about obedience. But first let's look at this. Jesus is sitting there and his relatives come, brothers and sisters is the word relative, but they translated brothers and sisters. They say He's out of his mind, He's crazy. Why would they say that Jesus is crazy? First off, because he gave up a good job, he had a good home, and his mother was taking care of Him. He's crazy for that. Second of all, He goes out and He's wandering the countryside, sleeping under the stars, wondering where His next meal is going to come from, He's crazy. He gives up all the things that they value, to go do something else. In that day and

time, you would've been seen as insane, just to travel, in this day and time. If you wanted to travel from your hometown and say, "Oh, I want to go see the sights over there in the Mediterranean, you would have been called insane. Because your security is here, you know where your next meal is coming from, these are the people that are friendly to you, these are the people that care about you. The word for stranger was the same word as enemy. You didn't want to get out there among strangers. That's why they said you're crazy. But then the scribes come and they said, He's driving out Satan because he's part of Satan. (By the way, that's a sin against the Holy Spirit, attributing evil to God. Attributing bad things to God, God is not capable of that.) Jesus had to give them a lesson in demonology. Satan cannot Drive out Satan otherwise it doesn't happen. He doesn't exist. This is a good point to talk about our slavery to Satan. Jesus said in the gospel that Satan is the prince of this world. He has the ability to be free in this world. In the book of Job, we see how Job has all these blessings; lots of livestock, lots of money, a wonderful wife, beautiful kids, and he praises God. Satan comes and God says to Satan, "Look at my servant Job, see how he always gives me credit?" Satan says, "Well yeah, you bless him like crazy of course he's going to give you credit. But what if bad things happen to him." So God says, "OK, you can do everything but kill him." So Satan kills his daughters, sons, he has all his livestock driven away, his servants killed, no more money, and so the rest of the story is about Job. Job's friend's coming and saying, "curse God and die." Job says, "No, I'm not going to curse God and die." And at the end God wins, he blesses Job. But it shows what Satan can and cannot do. Now, with what we see in the media today, we give Satan way more power than he has, way more power than he has. I know priest today that don't want to be exercists because they're afraid, there's no reason to fear, we have the power over Satan. We've had it since we were baptized. But everybody's always talking about demonic possession. Demonic possession is the rarest form of Satans' power. Satan only uses it in extreme circumstances. Then of course, we have the full blown exorcisms. But he has other little things in his toolbox as well. He can cause physical disturbances to happen around you, levitating objects, things being thrown about a room to hit you, those are called infestations. Those can be taken away with prayer, holy water, blessed salt, all that kind of thing. If the demonic activity affects your body, you start getting beat up by the demon, that's called repression. That's not very common either. St. John Vianney who lived in the 1700s in France who heard confessions for up to 18 hours a day or longer, Satan didn't like him, because he was turning so many people to become holy. In fact, Satan said, "If there were five more of you I would be finished in this world." Six priests are all it would take if they were like St. John Vianney. Saint John would go to bed and be woken up because Satan was beating him up and he'd laugh at him and say, "Get away from me old scratch." That's what he called him. And then Satan would set his bed on fire once in a while. But Satan was a coward because St. John, every time his bed was set on fire, he was in the confessional hearing confessions, he wasn't in the bed. He would come back to his room and his room was all trashed – infestation, and he'd laugh and say, "Old scratch has been here again." He didn't have any fear of Satan. There's another form of that and it affects your mind, it's called demonic obsession. Many of the Saints had this problem when they were dying. All of a sudden they would be attacked with blasphemous thoughts. "I hate God." All these kind of things. That's why we have people pray for us and with us when we're dying. But also why we pray now. Pray for us now at the hour of our death. All of these things are not very common. Satan's greatest tool is temptation. Most of the time we don't think he's doing it, we don't think he's behind it. "Oh, I'm having a bad thought." Yeah why? Because somebody wants you to have a bad thought. So we have to train ourselves for this kind of thing. Jesus came to be obedient to get rid of the disobedience of Adam. By doing away with the disobedience he gave us hope, he gave us tools to use. There are four different tools to be able to do away with these demonic things, but also to be obedient, do the will of God and know the will of God. The first one of course is prayer. The more we know about Jesus the more we know about God the less chance we have of succumbing to Satanic stuff. Sometimes people get involved in Satan through drugs, through the Ouija board, something like that. Sometimes they actually will it. If you're baptized, you

can't be possessed unless you give permission, unless you will it. A lot of times people don't realize, they're not really giving permission verbally, directly, but indirectly we're giving permission. So you have to be careful, you want to keep our minds and hearts in a position where we recognize when Satan tries to attack us. Satan doesn't like me giving this homily, last night he attacked me in bed, but I just pray some prayers and turn over and go back to sleep. I don't call him any names yet; I haven't figured out a good one. But you have to recognize, where is that coming from. So the first thing is prayer, talking to God, talking to Jesus, just talking, getting to know Him. Of course, taking some quiet time to do that. Not trying to talk to God in the middle of a group activity, trying to do it quietly, so He can talk back. The second thing is keeping our head in heaven, always focusing on the good. Where do I want to be? I want to be in heaven. Do I want this to happen? No I don't want this to happen. Like reading Catholic material, doing that kind of stuff. Watching Catholic movies. The third thing most people don't realize, hanging out with Catholics. We are not lone rangers. Jesus said, a sheep out there alone is an easy target, there's safety in numbers. They remind us and encourage us, when you hang out with Catholics. One guy says that Catholics are boring, "Father, I'd rather hang out with somebody else." And I said, "But where are you going if you hang out with somebody else, what are you doing? He says, "Well... yeah OK where is the confessional, let's go. And that's another thing we need to do, the sacraments. frequent confession frequent communion. These things will give us the grace and the strength to fight. So all of these things will help us focus on the will of God and being able to be obedient to it. Being able to realize it's not a drudgery, it's not slavery but it's freedom. Freedom to be children of God and freedom to enter the gates of heaven, which Jesus also did something about when he died and rose again.

God bless you