

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2018

My beloved brothers and sisters, many people struggle with the seemingly heartless treatment of Jesus' own family in this Gospel story. By the way, the Greek literally means His relatives, not: "His brothers and sisters." He is told that His mother and relatives are waiting for Him, and He does not seem to respond with any affection, nor to be interested in them; rather, Jesus is most interested in using this moment to teach about intimacy with Him and God. He gives us the way to true intimacy with our God and the way to true freedom in life. It is not the way of the excesses of the word and the declaration of independence that is now being proclaimed in our society that has enslaved people to victimhood and their passions!

First, what human relationship is more intimate than the relationships we have with our mothers or with our close relatives? These relationships never end and they involve a deep and unique knowledge that others can never have. Jesus teaches us that our relationship with Him and with the Father can have the same depth and intimacy that He has with the Father. He shows us how: "whoever does the will of God, is my brother, sister and mother!" There is no other human being that has ever existed that is more obedient to the will of God than the Holy Mother of God. Like her Son, her entire life was: *fiat voluntas tua*, "may your will be done in me as it is in heaven." That is why Jesus has given her to us as our own mother, and asks us bring her into our homes and lives. Like a good mother, she always leads us to what is truly good and holy for us!

Secondly, seeking, embracing and fulfilling God's will in our lives leads us into ultimate freedom and into an intimate knowledge of God and a familial relationship with the Son, Jesus and the Father! This is what God Himself yearns for from us. It is the reason why He created us! It is the obedient love of a child for the Father, that sets our hearts free from the tyranny caused by evil and selfishness and the other influences at work in the world, that Jesus calls: "the strong man...", the devil.

Finally, discovering and doing God's will is not something hidden and arcane; it is simply a matter of doing whatever comes next in our lives, with the simple trust

of a child in his loving response to his parents. St. Jean-Pierre de Caussade who was the spiritual director of St. Margarete Mary Alcoque wrote the book: *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, a spiritual classic. When he speaks about abandonment, he speaks of surrendering to God's will that is revealed to us in our daily lives, for our sanctification and the sanctification of others. Simply doing our duties and accepting our daily challenges with great love for God and for others is the path to holiness; and that is the will of God!