

10<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time

## Christ in Our Neighborhood



### Prayer

Father, when you created us, you said we were good. Help us to see the good in ourselves and others. If we hid from you in shame, find us quickly and bring us back to You. Grant this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Commentary

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Genesis 3: 9-15

The next two weeks feature a mini-series called "Hide and Seek." Beginning with our first reading from Genesis, we see how we are tempted to hide from God in order to hide our shame. When Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they discovered that they were different. They weren't like each other and they weren't like God. They hid their masculinity and femininity from each other and, in the garden, hid from God. Comparing themselves to each other and to God, they assumed that they were insufficient - that they were naked.

But God found them. And when He found them, He asked, "And who told you that you were naked?" - as if to say, "Who told you that you are insufficient?"

In shame, we run away from each other and from God. We are always comparing ourselves to each other. This is truly our original sin. But God always finds us and reminds us of our original goodness and dignity. We should never be ashamed of ourselves. If our past seasons of Lent and Easter have taught us anything, we should see that God is proud of us.

### Question:

Why do people compare themselves to others?

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

When we compare ourselves to others, we become self-centered with the need to improve ourselves. I'm good enough only if I have the right job, the right clothes, and all the right things. The problem with this kind of thinking is that we never stop to ask, "When will I really be right?" "When will I be good enough?"

We believe we're never good enough. And then we hide. We hide behind our careers, our compulsions, our makeup and dress. Anything (even a fig leaf) to make us look better! In the end, we have lost faith. Not faith in God as much as in ourselves; though a loss of faith in God quickly follows. When a person says, "I don't believe in God," we must respond, "But God believes in you!"

When we rely only on our five senses to carry us through life, we don't use the sense of faith, we will always hide in a garden. We will never be able to see the world as God sees it or as God wants us to see it. This is why St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that "We do not set our sights on what is seen, but on what is not seen." Faith in a God who has faith in us pulls us out from behind the veil of our five senses and, more importantly, our human insecurities.

### Question:

How do you know God believes in you?

## Commentary

### Gospel: Mark 3: 20-35

"If a kingdom is divided into opposing camps, it cannot stand."

Playing hide and seek is a fun game, but it's not how we should be living. We were meant to commune with God and with each other. Communion, not division, is our purpose.

In the beginning, Satan had a desire to be something he was not. He wanted to be like God. He even encouraged Adam and Eve to be like God. This was his great fall and our original sin. But, Christ, the new Adam, came to restore us, to bring us out of hiding and walk with us in Paradise.

There is great freedom in knowing that God loves us, redeems us, and desires to be with us. In fact, He wants to be with us now. Not when we die. But now. He calls us out of darkness and into His wondrous light.

When children play hide and seek, the game eventually comes to an end. Usually in English someone shouts: "Ollie ollie oxen free" (originally "All ye out, come in, free"). Christ also calls us out of hiding and shame: "Come out of hiding and enter my heavenly kingdom. You're free!"

### Question:

Do you ever question God's love for you?

### This Week's Task

Take some time to walk in a garden, the park or by a lake or ocean. Spend time walking in silence with God. As you do so, consider how wonderfully made by God.

Take the time to thank the Lord for considering you in His master plan of creation.

## Prayer

The group sings or says the following together:

For the beauty of the earth,  
By the beauty of the skies,  
For the love that since our birth  
Above and around us it stands,

Lord of All, to you we lift up this our hymn of grateful praise.

### The prayer continues with Psalm 130

#### Psalm

**Response: With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;  
LORD, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to my voice in supplication.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,  
LORD, who can stand?  
But with you is forgiveness,  
that you may be revered.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

I trust in the LORD;  
my soul trusts in his word.  
More than sentinels wait for the dawn,  
let Israel wait for the LORD.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.**

For with the LORD is kindness  
and with him is plenteous redemption  
and he will redeem Israel  
from all their iniquities.

**Conclude with an OUR FATHER.**