**Homily for the 10th Sunday in Ordinary Times**

June 9-10, 2018

Readings: Genesis 3:9-15; 2 Corinthians 4: 13-5: 1; Mark 3: 20-35

Preacher: Cathy Kamp

There’s good news and there’s bad news in Mark’s Gospel this Sunday. The bad news is that even Jesus was not treated very well by his own people; the good news is that all who follow Jesus are family to one another. As today’s followers of Jesus we can experience the same—the bad news of not being understood even by those closest to us and the good news of experiencing Christian community with fellow believers.

So why wasn’t Jesus accepted by his relatives? When he “came home” people clearly wanted to see him. They must have heard the stories of him healing and driving out demons. They wanted to see it for themselves and great crowds formed. But by the standards of the day, and likely ours as well, it appears as if Jesus was “out of his mind.” He had given up a livelihood as a carpenter in Nazareth; he was preaching a message that the orthodox leaders of the day did not like; and he was collecting a band of sinners and misfits around himself. Simply put, he had given up the security of a normal existence for risky ministry.

The scribes go further and say he’s possessed and doing the work of the devil. Jesus responds parabolically, trying to get them to see the impossibility of their statement and to teach them about the importance of repenting of one’s sins and avoiding willful dismissal of God, the sin against the Holy Spirit.

Ultimately, the story goes that Jesus’ mother and “brothers” come to see him. In response, Jesus redefines what family is all about. “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asks. Looking around the circle of disciples and others around him, he names them as “my mother and my brothers.” He says, “For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

By our Baptism, we too, have been born into the family of God; we too are mother, father, brother, sister in Jesus. The question for us is: Are we willing to take the good news with the bad? Are we willing to trade our familiar security for the risky business of ministering with all those we encounter in the name of Jesus?

As many reading this will know, most of our parishes and some of our local towns have outreach ministries to people in need. Sometimes, our suburban parishes are assumed to have no need for a food pantry or clothing distribution but this is not the reality. There are people living in poverty throughout our communities. In Penfield, churches and the community came together to form the Penfield Ecumenical Food Shelf 20 years ago and it continues to serve Penfield residents with food distribution to many families and individuals each week. In response to needs other than food, St. Joseph’s is launching Penfield HOPE. Some of the other needs we are responding to include: making diapers, wipes and clothing available to families with infants and toddlers; providing some household items; offering a place to apply for jobs online; and assisting with non-perishable groceries in emergency situations.

As our ministry is growing, we are at times met with skepticism about the need. But overall, we are experiencing great joy in joining with others who provide services, especially our mentors at Webster HOPE who have offered us training and a place to shadow ministers. We have been welcomed into training with Catholic Family Center and we graciously have been given tours of other church and town outreach facilities and processes.

I have been part of many small Christian communities or “families” as part of my parish ministry and value each one—perhaps most especially our pastoral staff at St. Joseph’s which this month celebrates the 50th Jubilee of our pastor, Fr. Jim Schwartz, as he continues to engage in his own loving, caring style of priestly ministry; the RCIA team at St. Joseph’s which greatly treasures its time together in table fellowship, learning, and initiation ministry; and our ChristLife leadership team which is on fire with the desire to share Jesus with others.

And now, there is the excitement of this new sense of Christian family with our newly trained parish HOPE volunteers, and with others engaged in outreach ministry in our surrounding parishes and towns. Each person committed to the ministry of serving the poor is a true brother or sister of Jesus; and each person in need who is encountered reveals the face of Christ ever more clearly, bringing all of us into the one true family of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.