



Daily Reflections

July 19, 2016

Scripture

Matthew 12:46-50

While Jesus was speaking to the crowds,
his mother and his brothers appeared outside,
wishing to speak with him.

Someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside,
asking to speak with you."

But he said in reply to the one who told him,
"Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"

And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said,
"Here are my mother and my brothers.

For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father
is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Our Scripture Reflection

Far from being disrespectful to His beloved family, Our Lord is instructing His disciples about what happens after we say, "I believe." When we do, and

truly mean it, a whole new relationship exists. He becomes Lord of all and Master of my thinking and living. Warning: there may be times when our devotion to the Lord will put us at odds with members of our biological family. During those times we must believe that His way is the right way and can serve as correction for those family members who err. Dare we trust Him that completely?

Food for your Journey

Although Victorians sentimentalized the family, Christians have long ruminated on the appropriate relationship between family and church. Jesus rather shockingly dismissed family ties in favor of "anyone who does God's will is my brother or sister." New Testament writers understood the church as a "new family," a non-biological kinship through Jesus Christ. In the fourth century, St. Jerome coined the term "domestic church" to describe Christian families.

One of my favorite books on Christian family life is *Sacred Dwelling*, by Roman Catholic theologian Wendy M. Wright. In it, she states: "To be the domestic church means that the family, in the uniqueness of its way-of-being-in-the-world (as an intimate physical, psychological and spiritual entity) is an authentic community of believers. It must know itself to be a community of persons tenderly fashioned by a loving creative hand, a community that tries to respond to that love by listening to the word that God speaks in Scripture, tradition, the experience of being together through the person of Jesus Christ, a community that, by hearing, becomes the word of God spoken anew."

Thus, Wright says that the Christian family exists "for the sake of the whole church and all of God's creation." The family's vocation mirrors that of Christmas itself because "the domestic church enfleshes the Word of God." Just as Jesus is the Word made flesh.

--Diana Butler Bass, God's Politics blog on the Sojourners website.
<http://sojo.net>.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, My heart is completely in Your hands. Guide me and direct me in Your way. Amen.