

**GOSPEL MEDITATION -**  
**ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE**

*June 9, 2024*

**The 10th Sunday  
in  
Ordinary Time**

**Readings:**

Genesis 3:9—15

Psalm 130

2nd Cor 4:13—4<sup>th</sup>1

Mark 3:20—35

Jesus asks us a stunning question this week: **“How can Satan cast out Satan?”** To enter into this question opens up the often-hidden dynamics of what Jesus has done and is constantly doing. If we’re honest, our response to some degree is: “How *else* can we cast him out? Satan is *precisely* how we cast out Satan!” But Jesus wants us to see this finally does not work. Here’s what I mean.



*Satanas* names the demonic mechanism by which we render wholeness through accusation. When we face a threat, we seek something to protect us (e.g., more money, social status, security, power, etc.). Rivals inevitably arise for these things and so do tensions. Accusation presents itself. “I’ll never be successful unless I get ahead of that guy.” “She’s already trying to get ahead of me.” “That group of immigrants is trying to take our jobs.” And so on. The accusation grows into a fear-inducing threat — things will break apart — no, they already are! Hurry! We inflict violence on the victim and — as if by magic — peace ensues. For a time. Soon fresh accusations are required to hold new chaos at bay, until there is no community left at all. This is essentially humankind’s sad history in a nutshell.

Jesus’ cross and resurrection unmasks this broken system of “casting out Satan by Satan” and ushers in a new one he calls “the Kingdom of God.” He reveals that the dynamic of accusation is nothing compared to his power of divine mercy and love. The cross (and not Satan) is the real power to tear down strongholds of sin and cast out Satan. This is why he describes himself as the **“stronger man who ties up the strong man to plunder his house.”** This week let’s notice the ways we **“cast out Satan by Satan,”** and then refuse to do it anymore. Because in the long run, that divided house cannot stand.

— *Father John Muir*, ©LPi