

9th Sunday of the Year B

The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is master even of the sabbath. (Mk 2:27-28)



First Reading

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

The Lord says this : "Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for the Lord your God. You shall do no work that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, nor your ox nor your donkey nor any of your animals, nor the stranger who lives with you. Thus your servant, man or woman, shall rest as you do. Remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out from there with mighty hand and outstretched arm; because of this, the Lord your God has commanded you to keep the sabbath day."

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 4:6-11

It is the same God that said, "Let there be light shining out of darkness," who has shone in our minds to radiate the light of the knowledge of God's glory, the glory on the face of Christ.

We are only the earthenware jars that hold this treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us. We are in difficulties on all sides, but never cornered; we see no answer to our problems, but never despair; we have been persecuted, but never deserted; knocked down, but never killed; always, wherever we may be, we carry with us in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus, too, may always be seen in our body. Indeed, while we are still alive, we are consigned to our death every day, for the sake of Jesus, so that in our mortal flesh the life of Jesus, too, may be openly shown.

One sabbath day Jesus happened to be taking a walk through the cornfields, and his disciples began to pick ears of corn as they went along. And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing something on the sabbath day that is forbidden?" And he replied, "Did you ever read what David did in his time of need when he and his followers were hungry – how he went into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the loaves of offering which only the priests are allowed to eat, and how he also gave some to the men with him?"

And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is master even of the sabbath."

Meditation

The rift between Jesus and the various religious factions widens. Conflict erupts into the open on the question of the sabbath, one of the most important observances of Judaism. This day recalls the divine rest on the seventh day of creation and commemorates the liberation brought to Israel by the Exodus. This is the celebration of a free people, capable of breaking from the cycle of work in a day of leisure consecrated to God. The legalistic tendency after the exile turned this law of liberty into an unbearable constraint. Many common activities were defined as "work" and thus forbidden.

In the controversy reported in today's gospel, we catch a glimpse of some pharisaical minds. They pushed to absurdity juridical prescriptions whose original inspiration had been lost. The disciples are caught pulling a few heads of grain. It is forbidden to "reap" on the sabbath day! On another occasion Jesus heals the man with the shrivelled hand. He has violated the law of rest! But Jesus does not allow himself to be intimidated. By biblical example, he shows the futility of this casuistry. He sends the Pharisees back to their catechism with an ironic "Have you never read?" He also recalls the primacy of charity. There is no day, not even the sabbath, when we are forbidden to do the works of love. To love is the goal of this day consecrated to God.

9th Sunday of the Year B

The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is master even of the sabbath. (Mk 2:27-28)



First Reading

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

The Lord says this : "Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for the Lord your God. You shall do no work that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, nor your ox nor your donkey nor any of your animals, nor the stranger who lives with you. Thus your servant, man or woman, shall rest as you do. Remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out from there with mighty hand and outstretched arm; because of this, the Lord your God has commanded you to keep the sabbath day."

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 4:6-11

It is the same God that said, "Let there be light shining out of darkness," who has shone in our minds to radiate the light of the knowledge of God's glory, the glory on the face of Christ.

We are only the earthenware jars that hold this treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us. We are in difficulties on all sides, but never cornered; we see no answer to our problems, but never despair; we have been persecuted, but never deserted; knocked down, but never killed; always, wherever we may be, we carry with us in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus, too, may always be seen in our body. Indeed, while we are still alive, we are consigned to our death every day, for the sake of Jesus, so that in our mortal flesh the life of Jesus, too, may be openly shown.

One sabbath day Jesus happened to be taking a walk through the cornfields, and his disciples began to pick ears of corn as they went along. And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing something on the sabbath day that is forbidden?" And he replied, "Did you ever read what David did in his time of need when he and his followers were hungry – how he went into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the loaves of offering which only the priests are allowed to eat, and how he also gave some to the men with him?"

And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is master even of the sabbath."

He went again into a synagogue, and there was a man there who had a withered hand. And they were watching him to see if he would cure him on the sabbath day, hoping for something to use against him. He said to the man with the withered hand, "Stand up out in the middle!" Then he said to them, "Is it against the law on the sabbath day to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to kill?" But they said nothing. Then, grieved to find them so obstinate, he looked angrily round at them, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out and his hand was better. The Pharisees went out and at once began to plot with the Herodians against him, discussing how to destroy him.

Meditation

The rift between Jesus and the various religious factions widens. Conflict erupts into the open on the question of the sabbath, one of the most important observances of Judaism. This day recalls the divine rest on the seventh day of creation and commemorates the liberation brought to Israel by the Exodus. This is the celebration of a free people, capable of breaking from the cycle of work in a day of leisure consecrated to God. The legalistic tendency after the exile turned this law of liberty into an unbearable constraint. Many common activities were defined as "work" and thus forbidden.

In the two controversies reported in today's gospel, we catch a glimpse of some pharisaical minds. They pushed to absurdity juridical prescriptions whose original inspiration had been lost. The disciples are caught pulling a few heads of grain. It is forbidden to "reap" on the sabbath day! Jesus heals the man with the shrivelled hand. He has violated the law of rest! But Jesus does not allow himself to be intimidated. By biblical example, he shows the futility of this casuistry. He sends the Pharisees back to their catechism with an ironic "Have you never read?" He also recalls the primacy of charity. There is no day, not even the sabbath, when we are forbidden to do the works of love. To love is the goal of this day consecrated to God.