

“BROTHERS AND SISTERS”

FIRST READING

A reading from the Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, by Francis of Assisi.

The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon all those men and women who have done and persevered in these things, and it will make a home and dwelling place in them. And they will be the children of the heavenly Father, whose works they do. And they are spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are spouses when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers, moreover, when we do the will of his Father who is in heaven; mothers when we carry him in our heart and body through love and a pure and sincere conscience; and give him birth through a holy activity, which must shine before others by example.

O how glorious and holy and great to have a Father in heaven! O how holy, consoling, beautiful and wonderful to have such a Spouse! O how holy and how loving, gratifying, humbling, peace-giving, sweet, worthy of love, and above all things desirable it is, to have such a Brother and such a Son: our Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for his sheep.

The Word of the Franciscan tradition.

(From Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol. I “The Saint,” pp. 41-42)

SECOND READING

A reading from the book of Hebrews.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father.

For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

And again,

"I will put my trust in God."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death.

Therefore Jesus had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The word of the Lord.

(Hebrews 2:10-14,17-18, new revised standard version)

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

At that time Jesus' mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." And Jesus replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.

The Gospel of the Lord.

(Mark 3:31-35, new revised standard version)