

## TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR C

1. We tend to be tribal people
  - a. Seek our identity with specific groups and reject others but this varies according to circumstances
2. Notice this from my family
  - a. My dad from Oakwood, my mother from Oslo MN
  - b. Both French Canadian heritage, yet my mother talked of not feeling welcome in Oakwood
  - c. However when she would meet people from Oakwood in Arizona, they were very welcoming
  - d. Not to criticize Oakwood but I think this illustrates tribalism I am thinking of
  - e. Smaller communities where everybody is related, very common that outsiders do not feel welcome
    - i. Remain outsiders for years
    - ii. We tend to divide ourselves into us or them; comfortable with us, and less so with them
    - iii. If we go out of state, e.g., Arizona, we feel at home with people from Dakota or Minnesota
    - iv. Overseas suddenly all Americans become part of our tribe
  - f. Not all bad, gives us something in common with people, feel at home with them
    - i. Risks for those we see as others as can lead us to rejection, even can go to extremes
    - ii. Places like Rwanda, Northern Ireland, the politics so tribal that discrimination leads to violence
3. St. Paul is challenging us beyond our natural tribalism
  - a. He challenges us to find our identity in Christ Jesus
  - b. We have been baptized into Christ Jesus, we are clothed with Christ
  - c. We share this in common with everyone around us
  - d. He wants us to move so far from tribalism that we do not discriminate against each other
  - e. We are neither Jew or Greek, neither slave or free, neither male or female
  - f. He goes further to say that if we belong to Christ we have become the family and heir to Abraham
    - i. We have inherited the promise of being God's chosen people
4. Challenge for us can be how do we separate ourselves from others
  - a. Instinct of tribalism is so strong, we look for those groups we do not belong to
  - b. Original sin that affects even Christians
  - c. For a time Catholics and Protestants rejected each other, accusing each other of being false Christians
  - d. Christians accused Jews as being Christ-killers, failing to pay attention to the gospels
  - e. Jesus chose to die for us, not because some group killed him
  - f. Perhaps we might want to reject some non-Christians such as Muslims or Buddhists
    - i. Vatican II reminded us that even those who never heard of Christ may be Christians if they are people of good will, trying to be faithful to God
    - ii. Even with these St. Paul reminds us we are one family in Christ
5. Actually our biggest risk is putting ourselves outside the family of God
  - a. We do this when we choose to reject our faith because it becomes hard to live
    - i. We may make excuses for our behavior when it really fails to live up to the command of love
    - ii. We can choose other values as being more attractive than God
    - iii. Ultimately sin is refusal to live as a member of God's family
  - b. in this sense that we can become the other, separated from the group we should most identify with
6. Jesus does warn us in gospel, that being clothed in Christ involves choices
  - a. He asks us to deny ourselves today, so that we may gain life with him
  - b. If we try to have everything today, all pleasure and advantage, we risk losing real life, life with Jesus
  - c. In this we can only judge ourselves, whether we belong to Christ or not
  - d. Everyone else we should assume is part of the family of God
  - e. If we choose to reject them, discriminate against them we may well be rejecting Jesus himself
  - f. Other hand if we choose to welcome others no matter how different we can be welcoming Jesus himself into our lives and friendship.