

Before that, though, Jesus gets accusations that are more than a little bit shocking. He is accused of being possessed. Of using "the prince of demons to drive out demons." His neighbors and relatives call him, in effect, a crazy guy.

Yet Jesus does not respond with shock or outrage. He actually seems calm and thoughtful. He responds by explaining who he is, doing it with clarity, reason, authority, and wisdom. And where does his unusual calmness and care come from?

Could it be from love? In his calmness and thoughtfulness and care, he just could be speaking out of love. He wants to have his listeners—and us—understand him and relate to him better—to get his message of love better.

Then, when his family comes looking for him, what happens? He does not turn his attention to them. He looks instead to those around him—or as St. Mark describes them: "Those seated in a circle" and listening to his words.

What Jesus says to them may have left everyone startled—and even very confused, and that might include us. Jesus says: "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." Unexpectedly here, with just a few words, Jesus gives a new sense of belonging, of describing what makes up the Christian community of brothers and sisters. Here is a new definition of "family", and, by extension, a new way of thinking about "home."

"Family," in the teaching of Jesus, is more than just a matter of genetics or geography. It is not just a shared history. It encompasses so much more than the people you call your relatives. The Christian family goes beyond blood.

Being part of Jesus' family means living—like Jesus—obedient to God's will. It means trusting in the Father who loves us and nurtures us—the Father who desires nothing more than for us to spend eternity with him and who sent his son to help make that possible.

It means embracing that Son as our brother—living with fidelity to God's teaching and with hope in a life yet to come—in a place we can only imagine. And that destination is, really, our home.

This Gospel episode in some ways foreshadows Christian persecutions that will come. It also foretells the rejection Jesus will have that will eventually bring him to Calvary.

But...long before that happens, Jesus shows that following his path is not easy, even in the place you call "home."

So...what is his message here? Would it be: Do not seek acceptance in this world. Plan instead for the next.

It is a timely message anytime. We cannot forget that in some parts of the globe today, to live as

a Christian is to live with a target on your back—to being rejected and marginalized, mocked, persecuted, imprisoned, even killed. The age of the martyrs is continuing.

But this weekend's Scriptures call on us to embrace being part of Jesus' family anyway—to remember we are meant for other things.

We belong here now, but, eventually, elsewhere. We always belong in God's love—and sharing God's love.

There is another Scripture from today that can help us here. It is in Paul's letter to the Corinthians—and to us. Paul writes: [You should] "look not to what is seen but to what is unseen." And Paul adds: "If our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven."

So, after Mass, if someone asks for your address, you might say: "Waupaca;" or "Parfreyville;" or "Wild Rose;" or somewhere else. But when we remember this weekend's Scriptures, we might immediately sense that local address is temporary. There is another place more long-term—in fact, that address is eternal.

In that eternal context, Jesus might say: "Janine—Logan—Jeff—Maureen—Luisa—everyone—that eternal address is for a place truly your home. And it is a beautiful home—and where everyone accepts you—and where there is...
no rejection.

Please give it some thought....