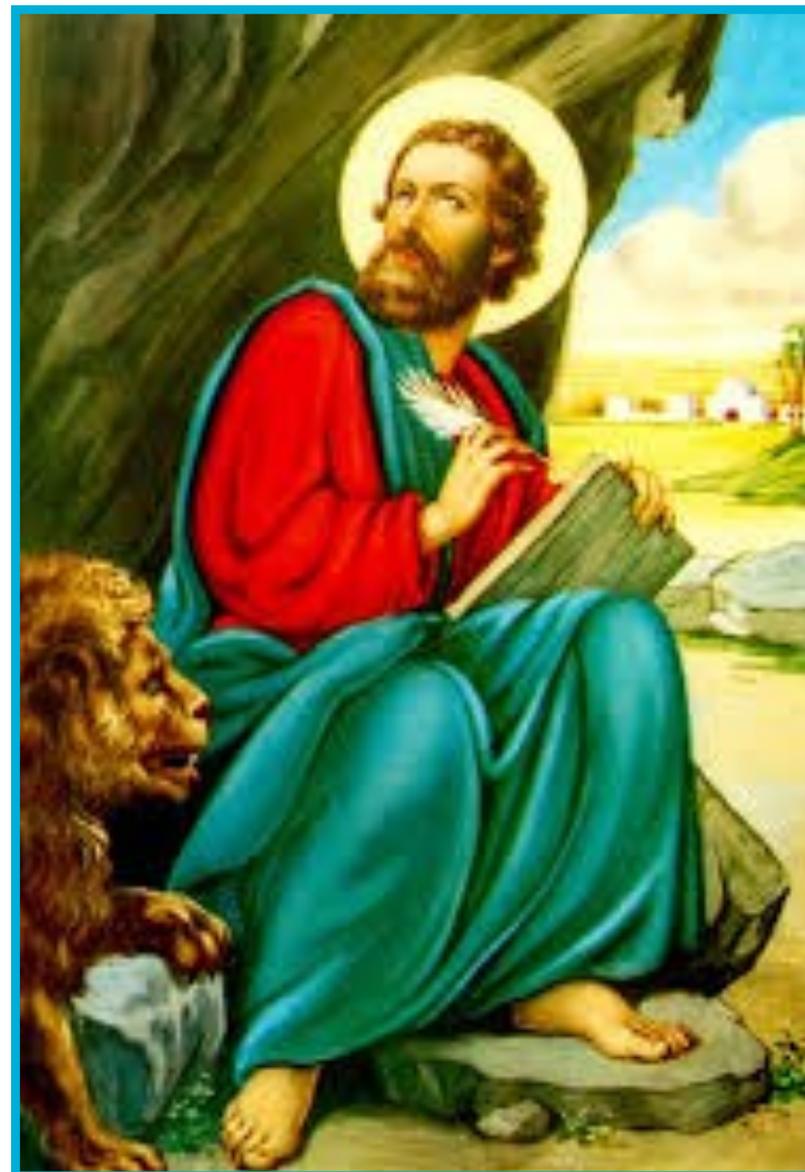


THE GOSPEL OF MARK

CHAPTER 9: 1-49



For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Mark wrote down Peter's account of the 'good news'. Peter was one of the first twelve of Jesus' disciples, and the first to publicly recognize Him as the Messiah. Peter, through Mark, shows us that Jesus fulfills all the criteria of the Servant-Messiah our Ransom, who was prophesied by Isaiah some 750 years earlier (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:5-7; 52:13-53:12). Jesus is portrayed as a slave, caring for people and serving God (Mark 1:32-35). There are therefore no details of His birth, only of the beginning of His service (Mark 1:1,9).

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapede's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapede's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Mark 9: 1-49

Douay Rheims Version

*Christ is transfigured. He casts out the dumb spirit.
He teaches humility and to avoid scandal.*

1. And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and James and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves, and was transfigured before them.
2. And his garments became shining and exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth can make white.
3. And there appeared to them Elias with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.
4. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

Lastly, the *Gloss* thus expounds, *Have salt in you, i.e., have discretion: and have peace among yourselves.* By wisdom and discretion peace is both acquired and preserved among men. For the prudent and discreet do nothing which may offend others and disturb peace. The same bear with the infirmities of others, while those who are impatient are angry, and strive with them.

5. For he knew not what he said: for they were struck with fear.
6. And there was a cloud overshadowing them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying: This is my most beloved son; hear ye him.
7. And immediately looking about, they saw no man any more, but Jesus only with them.
8. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of man shall be risen again from the dead.
9. And they kept the word to themselves; questioning together what that should mean, when he shall be risen from the dead.
10. And they asked him, saying: Why then do the Pharisees and scribes say that Elias must come first?
11. Who answering, said to them: Elias, when he shall come first, shall restore all things; and as it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be despised.
12. But I say to you, that Elias also is come, (and they have done to him whatsoever they would,) as it is written of him.
13. And coming to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes disputing with them.
14. And presently all the people seeing Jesus, were astonished and struck with fear; and running to him, they saluted him.
15. And he asked them: What do you question about among you?
16. And one of the multitude, answering, said: Master, I have brought my son to thee, having a dumb spirit.
17. Who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away; and I spoke to thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.
18. Who answering them, said: O incredulous generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.
19. And they brought him. And when he had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him; and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming.
20. And he asked his father: How long time is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said: From his infancy:
21. And oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do any thing, help us, having compassion on us.
22. And Jesus saith to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.
23. And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears said: I do believe, Lord: help my unbelief.
24. And when Jesus saw the multitude running together, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him; and enter not any more into him.
25. And crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead.
26. But Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up; and he arose.

27. And when he was come into the house, his disciples secretly asked him: Why could not we cast him out?
28. And he said to them: This kind can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.
29. And departing from thence, they passed through Galilee, and he would not that any man should know it.
30. And he taught his disciples, and said to them: The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise again the third day.
31. But they understood not the word, and they were afraid to ask him.
32. And they came to Capharnaum. And when they were in the house, he asked them: What did you treat of in the way?
33. But they held their peace, for in the way they had disputed among themselves, which of them should be the greatest.
34. And sitting down, he called the twelve, and saith to them: If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all.
35. And taking a child, he set him in the midst of them. Whom when he had embraced, he saith to them:
36. Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in my name, receiveth me. And whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.
37. John answered him, saying: Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him.
38. But Jesus said: Do not forbid him. For there is no man that doth a miracle in my name, and can soon speak ill of me.
39. For he that is not against you, is for you.
40. For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ: amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.
41. And whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and he were cast into the sea.
42. And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire:
43. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.
44. And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire:
45. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.
46. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire:
47. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.
48. For every one shall be salted with fire: and every victim shall be salted with salt.
49. Salt is good. But if the salt became unsavoury; wherewith will you season it?
Have salt in you, and have peace among you.

Salt is good, i.e., useful. “Ye, O ye Apostles, who have been chosen by Me to be *the salt of the earth*, are profitable to the world, that ye may season with your wisdom and evangelical doctrine all nations.” Hear the Scholiast, “It is a good thing to hear the Word of God; to season the heart with the salt of wisdom; yea, to be salt, like the Apostles, *i.e.*, to minister wisdom unto others.” Also Theophylact, “Salt preserves flesh; so the speech of a doctor prevents the unquenchable fire from being generated in carnal men.”

But if the salt become unsavoury (the Gr. contains an elegant pun, *ἄλς ἀναλον*, *i.e.*, *saltless salt*), *wherewith (i.e., with what other salt) will ye season it?* It is as if He said, “If ye, O ye Apostles, who are the salt of the earth, lose this virtue of saltness, and become unsavoury and insipid, that through love or fear of men, through cupidity or ambition, ye fall away from My doctrine and an evangelical life, who shall restore you to your former wisdom, vigour, and sanctity?” Christ plays upon the word *salt*. *For salt* in Lev. ii. 13 is to be understood literally, but here it is to be taken mystically for wisdom, and metonymically for the Apostles, who had in themselves this mystic salt. Hear the Scholiast in S. Jerome, “Salt is savourless which loves the chief place, and which dares not either to rebuke or confess, loving the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Christ has a reference to Judas, who being corrupted by the love of money, and becoming unsavoury, lost his Apostleship, and did not hesitate to betray the Lord.

Have salt in yourselves, i.e., the salt of wisdom and a Christian life, as humility, charity, contempt of the world, but especially peace; as Christ adds, saying, And have peace among yourselves. “Do not ambitiously contend among yourselves for the primacy, as ye have contended” (ver. 33), to which Christ refers. For such a contention will be a scandal to the whole world; and for that reason Christ subjoined what is said concerning the avoidance of scandal in verses 36 and 41. But if ye preserve peace and mutual concord, ye shall be for the edification of the whole world; and being united one with another in the bond of charity, ye will be invincible, and will draw all men to yourselves and Christ. Therefore by *peace* the *Interlinear* understands love. And the Scholiast thus expounds, *Have salt in yourselves*, “The love of one’s neighbour tempers the salt of correction; and the salt of justice preserves love.”

Have peace, &c. That is, let him who speaks eloquently greatly fear lest by his eloquence unity be broken. For, as Bede says, “to have salt without peace is not a gift of virtue, but a proof of condemnation; for the wiser any one is, the greater his sin if he fall.” “For there are many,” says the *Gloss*, “that whilst greater knowledge lifts them up, it separates them from the society of others; and the wiser they are, the more they fall from the virtue of concord.”

incorrupt for everlasting torments. For salt possesses the properties both of burning and preserving. It burns and torments by burning; by its saltness it preserves from corruption. The fire of hell does the same thing, wherefore it is appropriately compared to *salt*.

And every victim: *and*, that is, *like as*. As though He said, As every victim of God is wont to be seasoned with salt, according to the Law (Lev. ii. 13), so whosoever shall be adjudged to Gehenna shall be a victim, as it were, of the justice and vengeance of God for ever, and so shall be salted with fire unquenchable as with salt, that is, shall be burnt and tormented, and shall at the same time remain unconsumed in the fire." So Isaiah teaches that the wicked shall in their torments be victims of God's vengeance (xxxiv. 6; see also Ezek. xxxix. 17, and Jer. xlvi 10). For the wicked are, as it were, victims immolated to the honour of God's justice. This sense is very plain, apposite, and in accordance with the context.

2nd Others refer the words more remotely to what Christ said in the 42nd and following verses about avoiding scandals, and that to do so a hand or a foot must be cut off. It would be as though He said, "Cut off from thee the person who is as dear and as necessary to thee as a hand or an eye, if he scandalize thee; for every one who seeks to please God, and to offer himself to Him as a spiritual victim, must cut off from him, as by the fire of mortification, the man who causes him to offend, however dear he may be. He must, therefore, *be salted* by suffering tribulation, that is, he must be crucified and purified. He must be salted with the mystical *salt* of prudence, discretion, and evangelical wisdom, which teaches us that it is better to cut off our hand than to go into hell." There is an allusion to, or, indeed, in a mystical sense, a citation of Lev. ii. 13, "Whatsoever thou shalt offer in sacrifice, thou shalt season with salt." So Theophylact on this passage of S. Mark; Theodoret, Procopius, Bede, Radulphus, Rupertus, on Lev. ii., and Cyril (*lib. 15, de Adorat.*). Wherefore it is added, *salt is good*. Hear the *Gloss*, "To be salted with fire is for the love of Christ to deny ourselves of those who are nearest to us, and as dear as a hand or an eye." Hear also Bede, "The heart of the elect is the *altar*, the *victims* are good works, the *salt* is wisdom." Christ opposes the fire of mortification to the fire of hell, and the *salt* to the *undying worm*. As though He said, "That ye may escape the fire and the worm of hell, which concupiscence generates, be zealous for the fire of mortification and the salt of wisdom. For this shall take away the putridity of concupiscence, from which are generated the undying worms which shall be burned in the fire of hell."

3rd By *fire* Bede understands *charity* and the *Holy Spirit*, and His gift of *discretion*, by which He guides us into all good.

Lastly, the Scholiast in S. Jerome by *salt* understands also *the fire of Purgatory*. Hear what he says, "The victim of the Lord is the human race, which in this life is seasoned with the season of wisdom, when the corruption of the blood, which is the source of putridity, that is, the mother of worms, is consumed, and after this life is tried by purgatorial fire."

2 *Jesus is transfigured*. 11 *He instructeth his disciples concerning the coming of Elias*: 14 *casteth forth a dumb and deaf spirit*: 30 *foretelleth his death and resurrection*: 33 *exhorteth his disciples to humanity*: 38 *bidding them not to prohibit such as be not against them, nor to give offence to any of the faithful*.

Ver. 12. *And be despised*: Gr. *ἐξουδενωθῆ*, i.e., *be nothing accounted of*. Understand, thus shall it happen to Elias, that when by his great labours he has restored the faith, he shall in return for such great benefits receive curses and ill-treatment from the ungrateful and the impious, and shall at last be killed by them.

Ver. 15. *And presently all the people seeing Jesus, were astonished, and struck with fear: and running to Him, they saluted Him*. They were astonished because they saw Jesus so unexpectedly present after His absence, and at so opportune a time, to defend His disciples against the scribes. Again, it was because they saw in the face of Jesus, who had a little while before been transfigured, some remaining rays of His splendour; just as there were in the countenance of Moses, after his converse with God, rays, and, as it were, horns of light.

Ver. 19. *Troubled him*. Gr. *ἐσπάραξεν*, i.e., *bruised, tore, convulsed* his whole body. Wherefore it is added in explanation, *and being thrown down upon the ground, he wallowed about foaming*, because, in fact, the demon was experiencing the power of Christ, and foresaw that he would speedily be cast out, therefore with indignation and gnashing of teeth he thus grievously afflicted and tormented the *energumen*.

Ver. 29. *They passed through Galilee, and He would not that any one should know it*. Lest He should be detained by the Galileans from love of Himself and His benefits. For He was hastening to Jerusalem to His cross and death, about which He was speaking privately to His disciples, that He might accomplish the will of His Father, and redeem the human race.

Ver. 31. *But they understood not the word*. That is to say, in what manner, and for what cause, Christ was to die; and how these words concerning His near approaching death agreed with what He had often told them, that His kingdom was at hand. For otherwise the Apostles understood and believed that Christ would die (see Matt. xvii. 23), when they are said to have been sorry at this saying of Christ concerning His death. Unless you prefer to say that they were ignorant of the death of Christ, because they were in hesitation with respect to it on account of the different sayings of Christ, apparently inconsistent with one another, and that accordingly they inclined to the view which was the more pleasing to them. For it was this which they wished to be true. "For so lovers frame dreams for themselves." So they endeavoured to persuade themselves that these words of Christ

concerning His death had some other hidden meaning, and that they were not to be taken literally, but mystically.

Ver. 37. *John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him.* It is as though he said, "Have we done well or ill?" John asks this question not out of envy, as Calvin would have it, but out of love and zeal for the honour of Christ. And it was occasioned by what He had said in the preceding verse, *Whosoever shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me.* As though he said, If he who receives a little one in Thy name receiveth Thy Father and Thyself, what must we think concerning him who works miracles in Thy name, and yet followeth not us, that is, is not Thy attendant and disciple, as we are? "Because," says Cyril (*in Catena in Luc.* xi. 49), "the Saviour had given power to His Apostles to cast out unclean spirits, they thought that it had been conceded to none others save themselves to enjoy such dignity." So Theophylact and Victor.

Here observe that those who thus cast out devils in the name of Christ, and yet did not follow Him, were believers, but imperfect ones, forasmuch as they shrank from the rugged poverty and renunciation of their goods, such as was the lot of the Apostles. They shrank from following Christ in His evangelical labours and His persecutions. Still they have some faith in Christ, by virtue of which they cast out devils. So S. Ambrose (*in Luc.* xi. 49). And in so doing Christ wrought and co-operated with them, that His power and glory might be the more made manifest, which wrought such great things by means of those who were so imperfect, and, as it were, aliens.

Observe, in the next place, that the Apostles did not forbid such people through hatred, but out of zeal for Christ, as though they were detracting from the glory of Christ and His ordinance, according to chap. iii. 15, where Christ gives to His Apostles only the power of casting out devils. But this zeal of theirs was indiscreet, especially because they had rashly, without consulting Christ, forbidden them. And Christ showed them that this was so for a double reason. The first is what He brings forward in the next verse. In a similar manner, when Joshua saw Eldad and Medad prophesying, he wished to forbid them, as if they were detracting from the glory of Moses, in that they had not received the spirit of prophecy from Moses. But Moses checked him by saying, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would that all the people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num. xi. 29). This is the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of love and of the Holy Ghost, which makes large the heart, and envieth none, but rejoices in all good things, by whomsoever and in what way soever they are wrought (see 1 Cor. xiii.).

Ver. 38. *But Jesus said, Do not forbid him, for there is no man that doth a miracle in My name, and can soon (Gr. τάχα, i.e., easily) speak ill of Me.* Do not hinder him in a good work, and one that honours Me; because even if he does not follow Me, yet he is doing the selfsame thing which you do, that is to say, he is celebrating My name, and he is making it known to men by casting out devils. Wherefore he does nothing that is against My name, but rather propagates and glorifies it.

Ver. 39. *For he that is not against you is for you.* This man, therefore, is not your adversary, in that he does the same that you do. He stands on your side. He helps you; he does not oppose you.

Ver. 40. *For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in My name, because you belong to Christ: Amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.* This is Christ's further reason to show why the man must not be forbidden to cast out devils. It is as though Christ said, "If he who gives you a drink of water in My name, and for My sake, does well, and shall receive a reward from God, so likewise shall he who drives out devils in My name. For both the one and the other do a good work, and are profitable to their neighbours in regard and respect of Me. But the one confers so much the greater benefit than the other, by as much as the devil whom he drives out is more hurtful than the thirst which the other alleviates by a draught of water." So Theophylact.

Ver. 41. *And whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were east into the sea.* This is antithetical to the 36th verse. For Christ returns after the question interposed by John to what He had said concerning those who should receive a little child in His name. For as he who receives and cherishes the little ones who believe in Me, receives Myself, and shall be rewarded by Me with eternal glory in heaven; so, on the other hand, whoso shall cause one of these little ones to offend, offendeth Me, and shall be by Me condemned to Gehenna.

Ver. 42. *And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it of.* For a scandal is so pernicious that it harms not only the doer but the sufferer of it. Wherefore, if thou sufferest a scandal from thy hand, cut it off. That is, if any one, relative or friend, as useful and as dear to thee as thy hand, thy foot, thine eye, scandalize thee, that is, draw thee into sin, separate such an one from thy company, lest he drag thee with him into Gehenna.

Ver. 43. *Where their worm dieth not.* He quotes Isa. lxvi. 24. Christ repeats this saying three times, that He may impress these dreadful worms and these fires upon us, that through horror of them we may avoid every scandal and every sin.

Ver. 48. *For every one shall be salted with fire: and every victim shall be salted with salt.*

1st. Franc. Lucas and Maldonatus understand *the fire of hell*, that Christ gives the reason of what He had just said, *where their worm*, &c. The reason is, *for every one*, namely, such as are adjudged to Gehenna, *shall be salted with fire*, that is, shall be burnt and tormented with fire, but in such manner that by the same fire, as it were by salt, they shall be preserved