Devotional Reflection, Wednesday, August 26, 2026
Proper 16, the week of the fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
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Family: Friend or Foe?

Key phrases for reflection from today's Gospel reading:
7:1After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him. 2Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. 3So his brothers said to him, 'Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; 4for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.' 5(For not even his brothers believed in him.)

You will find the full text of today's Gospel reading at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (*BCP*, 981)
AM Psalm 119:1-24; PM Psalm 12, 13, 14
Job 6:1,7:1-21; Acts 10:1-16; John 7:1-13

Today we celebrate the Feast of Simeon Bachus. (See below.)

David's Reflections

Sir Lawrence Olivier was quoted by his wife on a television talk show as having said, "Behind every family's front door there is a slaughterhouse."+ What a graphic hyperbole, but within it lurks some measure of reality. Family may not be the friendliest or emotionally safest place. Those closest to us have more power to wound us, because we are more vulnerable to them and because we are better known to and more available to them.

Jesus' family was no exception. He had four brothers (see Mark 6 where they are named); today's Gospel makes it clear that they did not believe in him. Their message was "I dare you!" In our childhood we usually hurled that challenge at someone in whom we didn't have confidence, someone we didn't believe would be able or inclined to meet the challenge we had in mind for them. They were daring

him to put his life at risk by going openly to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. The narrator whispers in our ear regarding their lack of faith. The Gospel storyteller also intimates to us, the readers, that Jesus did not wish to go about publicly in Judea because the Jewish religious leaders sought a way to put him to death. Jesus did go up to the Feast later, but in his own time and in his own way.

It can feel especially painful to know that those closest to you lack faith in you and do not understand you. Can you feel beneath the taunts of Jesus' brothers an aura of contempt? Their sarcasm must have felt like emotional tooth marks in his psyche The word sarcasm is based on the Greek word for flesh and refers to humor that bites the flesh. They had grown up together, eaten together, played together, and worshipped together. But, in a sense they had not been together.

Jesus consistently experienced the resistance and unbelief of his family. Even his mother shared at one point in the belief that he was mentally unbalanced and attempted with his brothers to seclude him at home (Mark 3). His brother James, who became a leader in the Jerusalem church, may not have become a follower until Jesus appeared to him after the resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15).

On the occasion described in Mark 3, Jesus rebuffed his family members in the presence of a group of followers and declared that those who did the will of God were his true family. Most of us share Jesus' sense of estrangement from some members of our biological families. Thank God for Jesus, our brother, who feels with us the unique loneliness of that estrangement. And, thank God for friends, especially for fellow believers in Christ, who understand and value us and who function like mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, and aunts and uncles in our lives.

The psalmist may have echoed Jesus' experience when he said, "Though my father and my mother forsake me, the LORD will sustain me." (27:14, *BCP*, p. 618)

+NBC Today Show, Oct 25, 1990

Collect of the Day, Proper 16, The thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost
Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your

Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (*BCP*, 232-233)

Today we celebrate the Feast of Simeon Bachus, the Ethiopian Eunuch.
http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Ethiopian_Eunuch.html

Collect of the Feast of Simeon Bachus
Holy One of love, you called your servant Simeon Bachus to study your word and led him to the waters of baptism, making him your evangelist to Ethiopia: give us the grace to follow where you lead, overcoming the barriers that divide and diminish your people, that we may behold you in all your glory; through our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reign for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Grace
Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (*BCP*, 100)

For Our Enemies
O God, the Father of all, whose Son commanded us to love our enemies: Lead them and us from prejudice to truth; deliver them and us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and in your good time enable us all to stand reconciled before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (*BCP*, 816)

A Prayer for Light
Grant us, Lord, the lamp of charity which never fails, that it may burn in us and shed its light on those around us, and that by its brightness we may have a vision of that holy City, where dwells the true and never-failing Light, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*. (*BCP*, 110)

A Collect for Mission
Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not

know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. *Amen.* (*BCP*, 101)

Daily Office Gospel, John 7:1-13

7:1After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him. 2Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. 3So his brothers said to him, 'Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; 4for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.' 5(For not even his brothers believed in him.) 6Jesus said to them, 'My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. 7The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil. 8Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time has not yet fully come.' 9After saying this, he remained in Galilee. 10But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret. 11The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, 'Where is he?' 12And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, 'He is a good man,' others were saying, 'No, he is deceiving the crowd.' 13Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*
Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*