

July 4, 2021

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 6:1-6

Jesus departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house." So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. He went around to the villages in the vicinity teaching.

Background:

The text for this Sunday's gospel follows directly from last week's gospel text. The response of the people to Jesus' presence is dramatically different. The faith of both Jairus and the woman who had been hemorrhaging in last week's gospel was inspiring. But here, the response of people of Nazareth, Jesus' own kin, is debilitating. They do not take offense in Jesus' teaching. Mark states clearly in verse 2, "many who heard him were astonished." Rather, they reject Jesus because he is not acting as the son of a carpenter.

People in this period believed each person held a certain status that had been entrusted to them, and they were responsible to maintain that status. To try to rise above that status was a disruption of the social structures. A major factor in determining a person's status in the community was the family into which they were born. Sons were expected to carry on the trade and business of their father. Jesus was expected to be a carpenter like his father.

Mark signals the people of Nazareth's displeasure with Jesus by referring to him as the son of Mary. Nazareth is the town of Joseph. Usually, people were designated as sons of their father. James and John are known as the sons of Zebedee. When a person is referred to as a son of their mother, it usually is because the father is uncertain. Mark's community would have understood the reference to Jesus being the son of Mary as a derogatory statement.

Jesus is often portrayed as the master of insult. Here, Mark portrays Jesus as being ready with his own insult. Drawing on their sacred tradition, he quotes a familiar proverb to criticize those who are critical of him by casting them in same light as those in their familiar proverb.

Most of us realize that there is a great deal of Jesus' public life for which we have no record. Mark, like all the gospel writers, had to select what events in the life of Jesus would be included in his gospel. Why would Mark include a text that is not flattering to the people of Jesus' hometown? Why would he suggest, in some way, that Jesus was negatively affected by the townspeople's reaction to him? This text could be problematic for Christian missionaries who are trying to convince people that Jesus was the Messiah. Would the Messiah be flustered by a negative reaction to his message? Could the early Christians find in the Jesus who is criticized and rejected by his own family, a Jesus that they could relate to and be the Christ?

Reflection Questions:

1. Did you go through a period of life when you were uncertain about what you were to do or how you wanted to live your life?
2. Who are the people who have been most supportive of you as you found your own way in life?
3. Who were the people who had the most difficulty in supporting you during this searching period of your life?

4. Have you ever reflected on the fact that Jesus too might have gone through such a period in his own life?
5. Is it significant for you personally that Jesus was criticized by his family and neighbors because he did not meet their expectations?
6. What do you make of the statement that Jesus was affected by the negativity of his family and neighbors?
7. Can you take some time to talk with God about your experience of rejection, not being able to fulfill the expectations of others, or whatever struck you most strongly in this gospel?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscclalledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Please include this information when printing or forwarding.

Excerpts from the readings for July 4, 2021, the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

As the Lord spoke to me, the spirit entered into me and set me on my feet,
and I heard the one who was speaking say to me:
Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, rebels who have rebelled against me;
they and their ancestors have revolted against me to this very day.
Hard of face and obstinate of heart are they to whom I am sending you.
But you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord God! And whether they heed or resist—
for they are a rebellious house—they shall know that a prophet has been among them.

*Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.
To you I lift up my eyes who are enthroned in heaven —
As the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters.
As the eyes of a maid are on the hands of her mistress,
So are our eyes on the Lord, our God, till he have pity on us.
Have pity on us, O Lord, have pity on us,
for we are more than sated with contempt; our souls are more than sated
with the mockery of the arrogant, with the contempt of the proud.*

Brothers and sisters: That I, Paul, might not become too elated, because of the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell

with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Jesus departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house." So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Excerpts from Ezekiel 2:2-5; Psalm 123:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; and Mark 6:1-6

From Joe:

Friends,

Here are the gospel background and reflection questions for July 4th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. In the gospel from Mark, Jesus teaches in the synagogue after returning to his hometown, but he is not accepted there as he had been in neighboring communities. When the people ask, "Where did he get all this? Is he not the carpenter," Jesus replies, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place." The other readings also refer to the call of a prophet, and the experience of contempt and mockery, and that in the face of insults, power is made perfect in weakness. In the first reading, the Lord says to Ezekiel, "I am sending you to the Israelites, who have rebelled against me, and they shall know that a prophet has been among them." Psalm 123 laments, "Our souls are more than sated with the mockery of the arrogant and the contempt of the proud." In the second reading from 2 Corinthians, Paul writes, "The Lord said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you. Power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I am content with hardships for the sake of Christ.'"

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!