

Mark 6:1-6

Jesus went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, 'Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us?' And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house'; and he could work no miracle there, though he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

"The Gospel constantly confronts us with Jesus' mystery! "But who is he?" He had his family in Nazareth of Galilee, but he said, "Before Abraham came to be, I AM" (Jn 8:58). Our creed clearly proclaims that Mary's son - the brother of James and Joset and Judas and Simon - is also the Son of God. But such a faith is daily subjected to dispute, to the ironical or virulent manifestations of astonishment: "How can you be so sure? What allows you to be so assertive?" The debate that began in Nazareth will last as long as there are humans on earth... And today, among us, does he find this faith without which the Lord cannot perform any miracles?"
(Days of the Lord - Year B)



FOURTEENTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Year B

4th July 2021

This Man Is the Son of God



Last Thursday we celebrated the feast of Saints Peter & Paul, and in the gospel of the day (Matthew 16: 13-16) we heard Peter acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah. And Jesus responded by saying that he was a happy man because it was not the world that revealed this to him, but the Father in heaven. In today's gospel the crowd reject Jesus. They are closed to the voice of the Father, preferring to listen to their own experience, to their tradition, to their fears. Throughout his Gospel, Mark is posing the question, 'Who is Jesus'?

Where do I seek my answers?

Opening Prayer

O God, who in the abasement of your Son have raised up a fallen world, fill your faithful with holy joy, for on those you have rescued from slavery to sin you bestow eternal gladness.

Ezekiel 2:2-5

The spirit came into me and made me stand up, and I heard the Lord speaking to me. He said, 'Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebels who have turned against me. Till now they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me. The sons are defiant and obstinate; I am sending you to them, to say, "The Lord says this." Whether they listen or not, this set of rebels shall know there is a prophet among them.'

Ezekiel's ministry as a prophet was among the exiles in Babylon between 593 and 571BC. Ezekiel was a member of a priestly family. He was married and was well educated with a wide knowledge of national and international affairs. More than any other prophet, he was directed to involve himself personally in the divine word by acting it out in prophetic symbolism. In today's passage, we hear his call to be a prophet. Ezekiel is warned that he will meet with contradiction. He does not choose his mission, and however the people respond, he must remain faithful and speak God's word.

Who are the prophets, speaking God's word, in today's world?

Psalm 122(123)

*To you have I lifted up my eyes, you who dwell in the heavens;
my eyes, like the eyes of slaves on the hand of their lords.*

*Like the eyes of a servant on the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes are on the Lord our God till he show us his mercy.*

*Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy. We are filled with contempt.
Indeed all too full is our soul with the scorn of the rich, with the proud
man's disdain.*

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, to stop me from getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and stop me from getting too proud! About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said, 'My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.' So I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me, and that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong.

We have been reading Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians for the past two months and today we come to the end. Paul wrote this Letter in response to missionaries who had visited Corinth claiming to be 'divine' with the power to make others 'divine' like themselves. Christ was portrayed as the supreme example of the divine man, and consequently, his humanity was played down. In response, Paul emphasises the death of Jesus and the role which weakness and suffering has to play in our lives as Christians. Paul refers to his 'thorn in the flesh'. What this was, we do not know. But the important point is that recognising and accepting our weaknesses, allows God's grace to break through 'My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.'

Alleluia, alleluia! *The Word was made flesh and lived among us:
to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God. Alleluia!*

(Gospel overleaf)

Prayer over the Offerings

May this oblation dedicated to your name purify us, O Lord,
and day by day bring our conduct closer to the life of heaven.

Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that, having been replenished by such great gifts,
we may gain the prize of salvation and never cease to praise you.