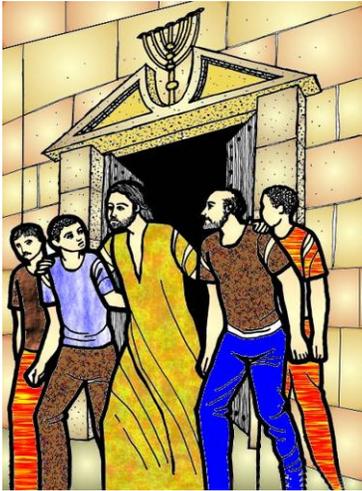


Lectionary Faith-Sharing Community

14TH ORDINARY SUNDAY

Cycle B - July 4, 2021

OPENING PRAYER



Guide: *It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to your name, Most High.*

All: **The just one shall flourish like the palm tree, like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow.**

Leader: *They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

All: **They shall bear fruit even in old age; vigorous and sturdy shall they be.**

Guide: *We invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit:*

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send, Lord your spirit and renew the face of the earth. Oh God, that you have instructed the hearts of your faithful with the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us through the same spirit that always enjoy her divine consolation. By Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING [Ezekiel 2 (2-5)]

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.

The book of the prophet Ezekiel begins with a vision that the prophet receives. It is a Theophany (Theophany = Manifestation of God). This Theophany is associated with the prophet's vocation as God's messenger. After the vision, Ezekiel feels the Spirit of God inside him and a divine voice entrusts him with a mission: to go to the people of Israel and make them see that they live far from God.

We read in this passage that the people were indifferent and rebellious. In other words, an attitude totally contrary to the will of God, who is always faithful and loving. Even before starting his mission, the prophet is warned of the opposition that he could encounter when trying to carry this message from God, for which he should not allow himself to be dominated by frustration or be depressed by the lack of successful results in this mission. The prophet must know that the mission is from God and not from him: Any success or failure does not depend on the messenger, if he does so by fulfilling the will of God. Therefore, God assists him with divine protection.

The prophet's mission is not to please the ears of his audience. On the contrary, he is the bearer of a message of denunciation that is not always well received. The prophet must confront his contemporaries and make them see that the path that leads to God is different from the path that the world usually shows. A

prophet is not a person capable of predicting the future, but a person who discovers God's will, God shows him what his will is, and he cannot stop talking about it.



(1) Who has served as prophets throughout your life?

(2) By being baptized, we are anointed as prophets. Have you carried out your mission as a prophet? When? With whom?

(3) Has it ever been the case that you have tried to carry a prophetic message and therefore have suffered rudeness, rejection, mockery?

(4) How can we handle objections and rejections to the message we are trying to convey?

SECOND READING [2 Corinthians 12 (7-10)]

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.

Towards the end of his second letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul defends his condition as an apostle, in the face of the accusations that some false prophets launched against him. Within this defense, Paul recounts the visions and revelations that he has personally received as a gift from God. However, in order not to be conceited, he confesses that he has received "a thorn".

This expression is very imprecise and we are still trying to decipher what he meant. Some say that it is a chronic disease, others a physical defect, there are those who understand it as the persecution of his enemies, while others suppose that it is some weakness that becomes a constant temptation.

The truth of the case is that despite this problem, Paul perseveres in his prophetic mission, his devotion to preaching the Gospel is not affected by that "thorn", and he discovers that in his weakness he finds a strength that cannot be overridden. none but God. It is divine grace that sustains him, and he ends up recognizing that "... when I am weakest, then I am strongest."

(1) If you had been given the choice of the "crosses" of your life, would you have chosen the ones that you had to wear? Why?

(2) Speaking with deep sincerity, do you really feel that God is with you in difficult times?

(3) Do you know any person who really lives what Saint Paul says "My grace is enough, because my power is manifested in weakness"?

(4) How do you think we could live this proclamation of trust in God?

GOSPEL [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.



The text of this reading is found after some teachings of Jesus and some miracles (all of which can be read in chapter 4 of the Gospel of Mark). Despite this, his countrymen fail to see him as an extraordinary person, and with the four questions that we can read, they show a skepticism that is painful for Jesus, who pronounces the famous words that have become a popular saying: «Nobody is a prophet in his own town.

People react like this because they have known him since childhood, they know that his family does not seem to have anything extraordinary, they are not scribes or priests, but ordinary people, like them. Jesus, in the eyes of those people, was one of the community, and from whom extraordinary events could not be expected.

The unbelief of the people prevents Jesus from performing miracles in his town. It is not a limitation of Jesus, but a demonstration that God acts only where there is faith. Miracles are meaningless in the midst of a community that will not respond with faith. The text concludes by saying that Jesus went to other towns, (not to heal, but to teach).

- (1) Is my faith strong enough that Jesus Christ can act as He wants?
- (2) Do I judge others according to their origins, families, social position, etc.?
- (3) How far am I convinced that a simple person can also enlighten me with his wisdom?
- (4) What hurts more, the rejection of strangers, or the rejection of relatives and acquaintances?
- (5) How are these rejections similar to those suffered by Jesus Christ?
- (6) When we feel humiliated and despised by being rejected, we can react negatively or positively. What are the negative reactions and what are the positive ones?

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord of the day and night, of the beginning and of the end: At the closing of this meeting, once again we lift up our hearts to You, divine source of all life.*

All: **We thank you for the gifts you have bestowed on us. We thank you for the love expressed in companionship and understanding, mutual respect and shared ideas. We give you thanks for your holy power that will help us in our concerns that we have shared. For these and all the gifts that come from You, we give you thanks.**

Leader: *Lord hear our prayers* (attendees can propose their own needs of prayer)

All: **In the same way in which we have being blessed by your presence as we meet, we ask now to bless our safe return to our homes. May your holy blessing be over us + in the name of the Father ...**

Leader: *May the King of the eternal glory gather us together in His heavenly banquet. Amen.*

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