

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of Ordinary Time. 2/3/2021

## **Jesus rejected in his town**

We hear today how Jesus was rejected in his native place.

It is a significant shock. He had left the town to be baptized. Now he comes back accompanied by a group of followers, a group of disciples. What a change! And on the Sabbath, he starts teaching in the synagogue, with a wisdom that leaves them astonished. The reality of what they see and hear clashes with the ideas in their heads, and with the labels they have put on people. They know Jesus well: he is the carpenter. What is he doing playing religious teacher?

The familiarity with that earlier time, the years when Jesus lived with his mother and earned a living with his hands,

that familiarity has made them blind, blind to the good news of God in their midst.

We also hear about the Virgin Mary in this Gospel. While Jesus was the carpenter who was getting out of place, Mary was just one of the women in the town. From the expressions used by the townspeople, we can tell that they saw absolutely nothing special in her. Her label read “ordinary”. In the purity and simplicity of her life, they did not perceive her holiness. She remains in the state Jesus was in those hidden years, sharing her life with her family, fulfilling her duties in life, keeping in her heart the joys and sorrows of each day, in which she knows God is present to her. And keeping a prayerful attitude in the desire of doing God’s will always and in everything, as the humble handmaid of the Lord.

If we were to run into this woman in the supermarket, or sit next to her in the bus, or meet her as a parent in our children's school, would we have the sensitivity to see anything special? Could we tell that she is deeply united with God? Would we notice her faith and her inner peace? And would this awaken in us a desire to have a share in her bliss?

There are remarkable events in our lives that shake us and make us turn to God, but he frequently comes in more discrete ways. He keeps choosing the familiar to enter the world and transform it. He is very near to us, in the simplest of things where we might not notice him, or in the unexpected events that don't fit our mental models and we might be tempted to ignore or reject. He is near to

us in each brother and sister, those whose company we enjoy and those whose company we find difficult.

He is present in the silence of the consecration, and he wants to give us his body in the appearance of bread.

Let us ask Mary, full of grace, to help us open our eyes to the reality of God in our midst, and to grow in reverence and love for his constant presence in our lives.