

Rev. Mark J. Vyverman
14th Sunday Ordinary Time B
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“He was amazed by their lack of faith.” As we listen to this concluding line from St. Mark’s Gospel, it always sends chills up my spine. It makes me wonder if Jesus is talking about us.

The original audience of this Gospel were the people in His hometown. They had watched Jesus grow up and had watched Him work with Joseph and help His mother Mary. These townspeople had probably heard the stories that had preceded Jesus back to town. They heard how Jesus had disciples traveling with Him, helping Him to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Somehow, He was also able to cure the sick, the blind and the lame. For some, this was probably too much for them. They wondered how it was possible for God to have sent His Son to such a little town, a town that was not filled with fanfare, with riches or fame. Instead Jesus was just like so many of them. They thought they knew Jesus and what He was all about. They knew His family, His cousins, His aunts and uncles. Now we find out the true source for their lack of faith. From the beginning, their minds were never open to the possibility that God could do something like this.

Perhaps Jesus expected more out of His hometown. He had grown up with them. Jesus probably knew most of the people in town by name or at the very least which family they belonged to. Maybe that was why He expected them to listen. But instead, He found that they could never get beyond the basics. Instead of acceptance and understanding, Jesus discovered ignorance and doubt.

Would Jesus want to say that about us? Think about it: Have our minds been made up, our hearts closed, all decisions have been made in the matter of faith? Would Jesus say this

because we assume that we know where life is going to take us? Are we telling God what the plan for our life is? Could this be the basis of our lack of faith?

In order to grow in faith, we must remain open minded and leave room in our hearts. As we reflect on the Gospels, we might realize that it is not written down that Jesus ever returned to His hometown again to preach the Good News. Their lack of faith was so great that they never changed their minds. Yet they had been given the first opportunity to witness and hear the message of the Gospel. But they choose not to accept it and forever rejected the message of Jesus. This becomes a reminder to all of us to not close our minds for such an opportunity to grow in faith could be waiting for us in the most unexpected of all places.

“He was amazed at their lack of faith.” May these words of Jesus never refer to us.