

Readings: [Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time | USCCB](#)

We all have expectations...

If you are anything like me, then once you found out who was coming to your parish community as your priest then you probably googled my name... confession time: how many stalked me on social media? Raise of hands... You probably looked at my posts, videos, pictures... maybe you asked around people you know that go to St. Louise to give you some insights, maybe livestreamed some of the masses I celebrated there to get a feel of who this Fr. Carlos was and get an idea of what to expect... Will he be a traditional or liberal priest? Outgoing or reserved? Will homilies be nap time or entertaining? Well, if you did a little investigating then you were either excited or disappointed by what you found... for those who were disappointed, sorry, I'm here now!

We all have expectations... what are yours?

I had my own expectations for you. When I was notified that I would be assigned as your priest my initial expectations were: it better be a beautiful church, financially stable, with a strong online presence and lots of active members. So first thing I did was stalk you, googled Holy Spirit Kent, expecting to find lots of info. First, I was confused by google images... it gave me photos of St Anthony's Chapel and photos of this church space and thought: well, which is it!? Very confusing! I found you on Facebook and got a glimpse at to the mass atmosphere... and some of my expectations began to be confirmed and others let down.

We all have expectations, expectations for ourselves, for others, for the important events of our lives... for our country, families, society, world, church community, and even expectations towards God...

Expectations in themselves are good, they give us a direction, they allow us to recognize what we consider of importance, priorities. At their best, expectations motivate us, give us hope. At their worst expectations discourage us when they are not met, and on comes a domino effect: skepticism which leads to disappointment which leads to rejection and resentment as those hopes and dreams come crushing down.

Many of you might have experienced that recently when you learned that your previous pastor decided to leave. Disappointment, discouragement, sadness, maybe even anger and resentment, perhaps to the point of leaving the parish. So, it would be natural for some of you to feel a certain skepticism about the future... not wanting to get too excited about this new change lest you be disappointed again...

God speaks to us, the skeptics, the disillusioned, speaks to our expectations and let downs... and says to us something very important, something very profound: *When you place your expectations and hopes on other human beings, then yes, you are bound to be disappointed, so instead, put your expectations and hopes on me!*

Ok, God, say I do that... say I put all my hopes and expectations on you... but end up being disappointed as well. Then what? Honest question... I mean, how many of you have ever felt disappointed at God? I have. God, why don't you end this pandemic with a snap of your fingers. God, why did you let my marriage fail. God, why do most of my prayers go unanswered? We run the risk of being disappointed with God just as much as we end up disappointed with each other.

In moments like these, the problem is not God, it is who we have expected God to be.

That is what happened to Jesus in the gospel. He arrived at the place he grew up in, but this time comes as a teacher.

That is something that is very common in different cultures: a person seeks enlightenment, goes out for years to pray and meditate, to experience the supernatural and gain all these new insights, and comes back with so much wisdom to be shared and people can't wait to hear about it... to be at awe by what they have to say, people want to have a guru, someone to admire, to tell them what they want to hear, they need someone in whom to place their hopes.

People gathered in the Synagogue to hear Jesus, ready to be amazed by his stories and mystical experiences, to hear him speak eloquently about the Jewish Law and the future messiah who was to come, to speak in a way that would make them feel good and hopeful and leave them in admiration (just like I bet you are waiting for me to leave you in admiration with this homily).

Well unfortunately, Jesus did not meet their expectations. Jesus spoke about the law in the heart and their need to repent, that the Kingdom was already there, but if they wanted to see it, then they had to be willing let go of their formed expectations and be open to God who might just surprise them.

I guess not everyone likes a surprise... they took offense at him, they became skeptics: *he was no teacher of the law, he was no one special, he was just the Jesus we grew up with...*

You see the problem for them was that, yes, they knew who Jesus was for they grew up with him, but they could not *understand* him. *We reject what we don't understand*, and we are not open to understanding when our expectations get in the way.

Many people reject Jesus today precisely because they do not understand the Christian message much less the messenger. Many see Jesus as just another human teacher, another guru, another social activist of his time but not relevant anymore because he doesn't really speak to what we are dealing with today: *he doesn't seem to be clear and forceful about things like racism and slavery, no clear teachings around gender identity and sexuality, he was not an avid proponent of the environment... clearly if he was God then he would have known these would be struggles of the future and thus would have spoken about it. Plus, those Christian values, especially around sexuality, they seem so medieval... no thank you!* People's expectations get in the way of recognizing Jesus as God today just as it did for people in his hometown.

We all need someone in whom to put our hopes, trusts, expectations... its natural as social beings, but until our hopes and expectations are placed on God through the person of Jesus, then we will continue chasing after the next person to admire, to make us feel good, to speak sweet nothings to our ears, the next great human being. Even within our faith context, we often look for the next great pope, bishop, the next charismatic priest... placing all of our hopes and dreams on that individual, risking being infatuated by the person rather than the source of the message, *risking being let down, again.*

We all have expectations...

Whatever expectations you have for me, don't... I am not your guru. Sure, I might have certain gifts I can bring to the table, but I will most definitely let you down as you come to know me because each one of you will have different expectations for me and despite me being a people pleaser, it will be impossible to meet them... For starters, I struggle with prayer, with seeing God's action in all I do, I struggle with resentment sometimes, I can

be an awkward conversationalist, it's not always easy to discern where God is leading, and I am easily distracted, even at mass (so don't worry, you are in good company) and God knows I often make mistakes in the liturgy but I try to just chuckle along... However, I do love Jesus and try my darn best to tell you about him with all honesty... that, you can be assured of.

Likewise, I will try to put aside my expectations for you... my hopes and dreams are that we quickly reach our ACA goal (still behind, by the way, more about that in the coming weeks), that we are overwhelmed with active volunteers and missionary disciples... that all the pews are filled on Sunday, that we spring up new ministries serving our parish community and city... that we put Holy Spirit on the map for our vibrant community and activism not only of NW Catholic but in the world through Social Media. Those are my hopes and dreams, they give me a direction, but at the end, if the spirit leads us differently, so be it...

My proposal to you is to put aside our expectations for each other, and instead put our faith and expectation on Jesus, the son of God. Let's start there. We can expect God to uphold his promise to always be with his people. We can expect Christ to always be present amidst our joys and struggles. We can expect the Holy Spirit to always lead us towards unity. How these things will happen, I don't know, but in faith we can trust that if Jesus truly is who he said he was, then this promise will be upheld despite our human weakness.

Dear new family. I have been waiting for this day for months. I am eager to start a new journey with you, to discover the fire of the holy Spirit together in new ways. Expect nothing less.

+ Fr. Carlos Orozco

Holy Spirit Parish