

GOSPEL

Mk 6: 1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

A prophet is despised only in his own country.

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 of the Lord.**



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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / B

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GOD WORKS THROUGH OUR WEAKNESS

It has been said that we are now living in a post-Christian society, where the Christian values that have undergirded our social fabric are being increasingly challenged. While the impact of our multicultural and multifaith society have their part to play, it is perhaps more helpful to consider that preaching the word of God has always been a task fraught with the danger of facing misunderstanding and rejection. When Ezekiel was sent to preach the word to the people of Israel he did not suffer from the illusion that success was certain. In fact, God commissioned him knowing that the task ahead was difficult. His task was to preach the word whatever the response.

Like Ezekiel before him, Jesus faced rejection from his neighbours and his relatives. Even Jesus had to work within the room he was given and his healing ministry was limited by the disbelief he encountered. Mark points out that not even God's Son worked miracles where there was no faith to request or receive them.

Like Jesus and Ezekiel, Paul had to come to terms with rejection from those close to him. In this case the very community which he had founded was divided and there were some who rejected him and resented the ways that he exercised his spiritual leadership and authority. As a means of trying to heal the rift Paul admits, unlike his opponents, that his weakness and frailty are real and yet God has chosen to work through them.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Ezek 2: 2-5

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.

The people are rebellious; they shall know there will be a prophet in their midst.

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.'

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 122. R. v. 2

R. Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.

1. 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. **R.**
2. 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 mercy. **R.**
3. 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. **R.**

SECOND READING

2 Cor 12: 7-10

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

I will glory in my infirmities so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

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.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Lk 4: 18

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!