

CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation

July 5, 2009

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle B)



Gospel reading

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. **Nazareth*

Brief commentary:

Mark wants his readers to learn about the mighty deeds of Jesus fast. In the first 5 chapters of his Gospel Jesus has shown power over demons, over the forces of nature, over sickness and even death. This should have been enough to strengthen the faith of his followers. Yet, with chapter 6 begins the account of frustrating responses to Jesus' acts and teachings. By placing this scene here, Mark connects Jesus' mighty deeds, which were a prelude to his Resurrection, with his rejection. Jesus was proclaiming in words and deeds, that the kingdom of God was at hand. As a result, like the prophet Ezekiel in today's First Reading, Jesus faced rejection from his own. The lack of understanding of the disciples will be highlighted in the following chapters.

Because of their lack of faith, Jesus is unable to perform any miracles in their midst. Last week's passage encouraged the disciples to have faith and not to fear. Today, Jesus is discouraged by their doubting and skepticism.

Today's reading offers three significant messages:

- In Semitic usage, the reference to Jesus' brothers and sisters could refer to cousins, stepbrothers or stepsisters and members of the extended family, as well as to blood sisters or brothers. Mark's interest is not to prove Jesus' blood family ties but to pass on the account of the rejection of his own hometown friends and relatives.
- Jesus compares himself to previous Hebrew prophets whom the people rejected.
- Jesus' humble human origin is cause for scandal. Is he not the carpenter? This is the mystery and the awesomeness of the Incarnation!

For our shared or personal reflection:

After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.

1. How open am I to the "newness" of Jesus' message? Am I sometimes tempted to reject it?
2. Do I judge people based on their origins or their families? Do I doubt that wisdom can come from a simple "carpenter?"

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 500; 2609-2610.

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