

14th Sunday of the Year B

First Reading Ezekiel 2:2-5

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."

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

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.

Gospel Mark 6:1-6

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.

Meditation

At the conclusion of the Galilean ministry, Jesus encounters failure. He is rejected by his townspeople. Everything had started well. The astonishment of the people of Nazareth at the wisdom and miracles of the one they thought they knew had led them to ask themselves the right question, the one that could lead them to faith: "Where did he get all this?" It sufficed to recall what Moses had foretold: "A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your own kinsmen: to him you shall listen" (Dt 18:15). To speak to people, God usually chooses those who are close to them. But the faith of the people of Nazareth stumbles over the ordinary, familiar nature of Jesus' presence among them. That is not how they imagined a man of God, a prophet. Jesus, in his turn is surprised. He seems disarmed, incapable of performing any miracles.

We too can paralyse others and reduce them to impotence by withdrawing our confidence, imprisoning them in ready-made categories. How much energy has been suppressed or discouraged, how many joys stifled by our definitive judgements on those whom we think we know?

Do we allow any room for growth in our consideration of others?

Yet God often calls us through very ordinary beings in whom we must recognize his unforeseeable presence. The guest, the sick person, the stranger, the neighbour are so many roads to grace.

We must keep in our hearts the attitude of waiting that calls for and unveils miracles.

To reveal himself, God needs people.