



There is a somewhat peculiar contrast in the reaction of the Nazareth people to Jesus in our Gospel reading today.

Jesus has set out his programme for ministry in terms of the prophet Isaiah and this won the approval of all those who heard it. It is not so much Jesus' local origins as "the son of Joseph" which causes the consternation and change of attitude as his declaration that his message is not for one privileged group, but for all people.

The two incidents to which Jesus refers apply to the prophet Elijah and his disciple and successor Elisha. Both the widow at Zarephath and the Syrian military officer Naaman were Gentiles. The implication is that Capernaum is also to some extent foreign territory: the townsfolk are depicted as expecting Jesus to perform such works in a properly Jewish setting. What seems to enrage them is the notion that Gentiles can share in the good news that Jesus brings. They are intent on doing away with him, but he somehow eludes them and escapes.

Thus at the outset of Jesus' ministry, we find that he is rejected by the very people who should have embraced him and his message. This theme will recur through Luke's two-volume book, the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles. ■

Aerial image of old city houses of Nazareth

SAY

The Spirit lives to set us free and binds us all in unity: walk, walk in the light.

(Damian Lundy)

DO

Think about how your parish can welcome those who feel rejected – and see what you can do to draw them into the community.



LEARN

The stories of Elijah and Elisha are found in the books of Kings.

There are echoes of the stories of these two prophets in Luke's presentation of Jesus as prophet.

Capernaum is the town on the shore of the Lake of Galilee which Jesus makes the base for his ministry when he leaves Nazareth.

REFLECT

The theme runs through the Gospel tradition that Jesus' message is for all people and not restricted to any one particular group. We may understand this easily enough in terms of the split between Judaism and Christianity: this bitter quarrel is reflected in the writings of the New Testament, the Christian scriptures.

But the scriptures are addressed to us today, in our time and place. Perhaps we are being asked today if there are people who are considered beyond the pale: are there groups who are regarded as not acceptable to the community for one reason or another? Who are told that they are not welcome at the Eucharist? And why? What about gay people? Those whose married life did not turn out as they had hoped and find themselves barred from the sacraments? What is the good news as far as they are concerned?

One thing apparently not realised, or perhaps overlooked, is that the only people affected by the official rulings are those to whom the Church matters, to whom the Eucharist and the sacraments are important. There are some who attend Mass weekly but do not receive Communion because their situation is deemed unacceptable. In today's Gospel episode, the townsfolk of Nazareth rise up violently against Jesus because he points out that the prophets Elijah and Elisha ministered in remarkable ways to people who were outside the nation of Israel: he says that his ministry is along the same lines, to those who will accept him and his message. Salvation is for all, especially those most in need.

Who are most in need of the love of God today? Who feel excluded by the Church? What would Jesus do? ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Save us, O Lord our God!
And gather us from the nations,
To give thanks to your holy name,
and make it our glory to praise you.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Grant us, Lord our God,
that we may honour you with all our mind,
and love everyone in truth of heart...
Amen.

FIRST READING Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

In the days of Josiah, the word of the Lord was addressed to me saying,

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;
before you came to birth I consecrated you;
I have appointed you as prophet to the nations.

So now brace yourself for action.
Stand up and tell them
all I command you.

Do not be dismayed at their presence,
or in their presence I will make you dismayed.
I, for my part, today will make you
into a fortified city,
a pillar of iron,
and a wall of bronze
to confront all this land:
the kings of Judah, its princes,
its priests and the country people.
They will fight against you
but shall not overcome you,
For I am with you to deliver you –
It is the Lord who speaks."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 70

Response:

My lips will tell of your help.

1. In you, O Lord, I take refuge;
Let me never be put to shame.
In your justice rescue me, free me:
pay heed to me and save me. (R.)
2. Be a rock where I can take refuge,
a mighty stronghold to save me;
for you are my rock, my stronghold.
Free me from the hand of the wicked. (R.)
3. It is you, O Lord, who are my hope,
my trust, O Lord, since my youth.
On you I have leaned from my birth,
from my mother's womb you have been
my help. (R.)

4. My lips will tell of your justice
And day by day of your help.
O God, you have taught me from my
youth
And I proclaim your wonders still. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

(For shorter form read between > <)

>A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.<

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am
going to show you a way that is better than any
of them.

If I have all the eloquence of men or of
angels, but speak without love, I am simply a
gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have
the gift of prophecy, understanding all the
mysteries there are, and knowing everything,
and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move
mountains, but without love, then I am nothing
at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by
piece, and if I even let them take my body to
burn it, but am without love, it will do me no
good whatever.

>Love is always patient and kind: it is never
jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it
is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence,
and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in
other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is
always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to
endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there
are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when
they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will
not continue for ever; and knowledge – for
this, too, the time will come when it must
fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our
prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection
comes, all imperfect things will disappear.
When I was a child, I used to talk like a child,
and think like a child, and argue like a child,
but now I am a man, all childish ways are put
behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection
in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face
to face. The knowledge that I have now is
imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am
known.

In short, there are three things that last: faith,
hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

The word of the Lord.<

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the
Lord;

no one can come to the Father except
through me.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 4:21-30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

Jesus began to speak in the synagogue, "This
text is being fulfilled today even as you listen."
And he won the approval of all, and they were
astounded by the gracious words that came
from his lips.

They said, "This is Joseph's son, surely?"
But he replied, "No doubt you will quote me
the saying, 'Physician, heal yourself' and
tell me, 'We have heard all that happened in
Capernaum, do the same here in your own
countryside.'" And he went on, "I tell you
solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his
own country.

"There were many widows in Israel, I can
assure you, in Elijah's day, when heaven
remained shut for three years and six months
and a great famine raged throughout the land,
but Elijah was not sent to any one of these; he
was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian

town. And in the prophet Elisha's time there
were many lepers in Israel, but none of these
was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman."

When they heard this everyone in the
synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their
feet and hustled him out of the town; and they
took him up to the brow of the hill their town
was built on, intending to throw him down
the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and
walked away.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the
Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin
Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of
life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O Lord, we bring to your altar
these offerings of our service:
be pleased to receive them, we pray,
and transform them
into the Sacrament of our redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Let your face shine on your servant.
Save me in your merciful love.
O Lord, let me never be put to shame,
for I call on you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these redeeming gifts,
we pray, O Lord,
that through this help to eternal salvation
true faith may ever increase.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

