

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time – 01-30-2022

“Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying: ‘Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.’ And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.” But the tenor changed very quickly.

“They also asked, ‘Isn’t this the son of Joseph?’” As if to say, “What’s the big deal? We know his parents. He’s just a local carpenter. He’s nobody.”

This must have been their attitude or Jesus would not have responded to them so harshly when he reminded them of their history. He forced them to think about something very uncomfortable. As Dr. Jordan Peterson once said, “The chaos was already built in.”

The miracles that Jesus spoke of during the time of Elijah and Elisha were not granted to the children of Israel but rather to foreigners.

Jesus had rightly prophesied to them that they would reject him just like their ancestors had rejected the prophets before him.

And even though he had only spoken the truth they were offended. Ultimately, he was saying that they were suffering from a type of spiritual leprosy. They didn’t want to have to think about that.

“When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong.”

Deep down they knew he was right but they didn't want to hear it. I propose they had very little if any love in their hearts. So they turned to ridicule, hatred and even violence.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth..."

There was no rejoicing with the truth among those from Jesus' native place on that day. In fact the truth that he spoke almost got him, Truth Incarnate, thrown off a cliff.

I wonder if anything has changed. Do we want to be forced to actually think?

I believe it was St. Thomas Aquinas who said that man's first reaction to the truth is often anger when he is not living according to that truth.

Although it's widely ridiculed today the Church continues to teach that Truth is inscribed in our nature. The natural law is literally encoded in our very being by God so that we can judge between good and evil – right and wrong.

We heard in the first reading that before we were formed in our mother's wombs we were known by God and dedicated as prophets to the nations.

As baptized Christians we are dedicated prophets to the nations.

A prophet speaks truth regardless of the consequences knowing that the Lord will not leave him crushed because he has made him a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of brass, against the whole land. Authentic Christian prophecy forces people to think.

Unfortunately there are many, many of whom even call themselves Christian, who become very angry especially when they hear the moral truths of the Catholic Church proclaimed.

If we take up the Truths of our faith and proclaim them, forcing people to actually think, we will be hated and ridiculed by many and if they could some of them may try to throw us off a cliff.

Telling the Truth, especially regarding the moral Truths of the faith, regardless of the cost is true love because it wills the good of another in spite of the consequences.

It means loving someone enough to tell them the Truth even though they may hate you for a time and maybe even forever.

True love never fails because God is love and to live in the Truth holds the promise that one day we may actually live with the Truth as well.

If we want others to live in the truth in this life and with the Truth in the life to come then, like Jesus, we must patiently proclaim it amidst those who oppose it and endure whatever comes our way, until our very last breath.