

## **Rejection is a cancer in a rebellious soul**

Lectio Divina of the fourteenth Sunday B

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**Opening prayer:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Heavenly Father, we thank you, praise you and bless you for this evening to read and meditate on your words of everlasting life. We come before you surrendering struggles and heartaches. Touch us and fill us with your light and your hope. Give us strength when we are weak, love when we feel forsaken, courage when we are afraid, wisdom when we feel ignorant, comfort when we are alone, hope when we feel rejected, and peace when we are in turmoil. Renew our strength. Fill us with your supernatural power to overcome each obstacle in our path. With our eyes on you, with you walking beside us, working through us, we can make it. In Jesus's name, Amen.

### **First reading: A reading from the book of Prophet Ezekiel 2:2-5**

As the Lord spoke to me, the spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard the one who was speaking say to me: Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have revolted against me to this very day. Hard of face and obstinate of heart are they to whom I am sending you. But you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord God! And whether they heed or resist—for they are a rebellious house—they shall know that a prophet has been among them.

**(The Word of the Lord/Thanks be to God).**

**Commentary:** Ezekiel had an open and obedient attitude and God filled him with his spirit and gave him power for the job ahead. He was called to give God's message to the stubborn and rebellious people, whether they would listen or not. Ezekiel's success would not be how well the people responded, but how well he obeyed God and fulfilled God's plan in his prophetic ministry. God does not judge us for how well others respond to our faith, but for how faithful we have been.

Responsorial psalm 123: *Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.*

To you I lift up my eyes who are enthroned in heaven  
As the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters.  
**R. Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.**

As the eyes of a maid are on the hands of her mistress,  
So are our eyes on the Lord, our God, till he have pity on us.  
**R. Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.**

Have pity on us, O Lord, have pity on us,  
for we are more than sated with contempt;  
our souls are more than sated with the mockery of the arrogant,  
with the contempt of the proud.

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

**Second reading: A Reading from the Second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 12: 7-10**

Brothers and sisters: That I, Paul, might not become too elated, because of the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.  
**(The Word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God)**

**Commentary:** We don't know what Paul's thorn in the flesh was because he does not tell us. Some have suggested that it was malaria, epilepsy or a disease of the eyes (Gal 4:13-15). Whatever the case, it was a chronic and debilitating problem which at times kept him from working. This thorn was a hindrance to his ministry and he prayed for its removal but God refused. Paul was a very self sufficient person, so this thorn must have been difficult for him. It kept Paul humble, reminded him of his need for constant contact with God. Although God didn't remove Paul's physical affliction, he promised to demonstrate his power in Paul. Our weakness not only helps develop christian character, it also deepens our worship, because in admitting our weakness, we affirm God's strength.

**Gospel reading: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. 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.

**(The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ).**

**Meditation:** Jesus was teaching effectively and wisely but the people of his hometown saw him as only a carpenter. "He is no better than we are - he is just a

common laborer” they said. They were offended that others could be impressed by Jesus and follow him. They rejected his authority because he was one of their peers. They thought that they knew him, but their preconceived notions about who he was made it impossible for them to accept his message. Let our prejudice and preconceived notions not blind us to truth.

Jesus said that a prophet is never honored in his hometown. But that does not make his work any less important. A person does not need to be respected or honored to be useful to God. If our friends, neighbors and or family don't respect our christian work, we should seriously consider their acquaintances because there is no compromise on our service to God. Jesus could have done greater miracles in Nazareth but he chose not to because of the people's pride and unbelief. The miracles that he did had little effect on the people because they did not accept his message or believe that he was from God. Therefore Jesus looked elsewhere , seeking those who would respond to his miracles and message.

To be rejected by one's own people is a painful experience. When our right motivations and good actions are interpreted differently and as a result rejected, it is quite natural that we are deeply pained and disappointed to the extent of closing our mind and heart. Jesus was rejected not for something wrong he said or did, but because his wisdom was far more than the expectation of his village people. They did not look at the message but the messenger. They did not go by faith but by sight. In short, familiarity, envy and jealousy were like cancers in their soul and prevented them from acknowledging that this son of their soil was their Messiah in person. So they rejected him and his message. As a human being Jesus was certainly affected by the way they reacted to him. His ministry in his own village was a total failure. Yet with no complaint or bitterness he withdrew. The lack of faith of his own people, their unwelcome attitude, prejudice and rejection disabled Jesus and limited his ministry in his hometown.

### **What can we learn from today's gospel?**

1) We may draw a couple of practical lessons. First of all, God's message can come to us from very ordinary people in our midst. But if by our prejudice we fail to recognize and accept them we are the losers. We must never forget that God can write straight even in crooked lines. Truth, goodness, greatness can come from anybody and any corner. We need intellectual honesty to accept truth, goodness and greatness coming from anyone and accepting them with great admiration and appreciation.

2) We must always be prepared for the worst. In our endeavors to do something good, we may meet with rejection and failure. But we need not lose heart. Perhaps some of our own friends, families, children and grandchildren may fail to listen to us because of familiarity and they may refuse to accept our words of

grace, love and encouragement. They may fail to see us as God's instruments of healing and grace. But we have to face such rejection with prophetic courage

3) Let us also acknowledge, appreciate and encourage the prophets of our time who stand for truth and justice in our society with the wisdom of God in their heads, the power of the Holy Spirit in their words and the courage of God in their actions. Let us not take for granted the presence of God among us in the persons of our families and friends.

4) Rejections are unavoidable. If Jesus was rejected for doing good, who are we? Like Jesus, the rejected stone became a corner, the Lord will elevate us in due time like Joseph in the OT who was rejected by his own brothers. The words of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta are worth pondering over

### "Do It Anyway"

- *People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self centered. Forgive them anyway.*
- *If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.*
- *If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.*
- *If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.*
- *What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.*
- *If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.*
- *The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.*
- *Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.*
- *In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway. (St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta)*

**Concluding prayer:** Lord, You are our hiding place and refuge in the time of distress. You are our help and comfort. You shelter and surround us in love so tender that we may know your presence with us now and always. Help us to turn to you seeking your comfort from the wounds of the world and empower us to face all afflictions and rejections. When we feel struck down, remind us that we are never defeated. When we feel persecuted, remind us that we are never forsaken. When we are afflicted, remind us that we cannot be crushed. Lord, we ask that you heal our broken hearts and crushed spirits of the disappointments and rejections that we face every day. Remove the heaviness within our hearts and give us the strength to forgive. Give us the power to look beyond the disappointments of now and remind us that you will make all things work together for our good.