

Sunday 4th (C) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 4,21-30): Jesus began to speak in the synagogue, «Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen». All agreed with him and were lost in wonder, while he kept on speaking of the grace of God. Nevertheless they asked, «Who is this but Joseph's son?». So he said, «Doubtless you will quote me the saying: 'Doctor, heal yourself!'. Do here in your town what they say you did in Capernaum». Jesus added, «No prophet is honored in his own country. Truly, I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens with-held rain for three years and six months and a great famine came over the whole land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow of Zarephath, in the country of Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, the prophet, and no one was healed except Naaman, the Syrian».

On hearing these words, the whole assembly became indignant. They rose up and brought him out of the town, to the edge of the hill on which Nazareth is built, in-tending to throw him down the cliff. But he passed through their midst and went his way.

«No prophet is honored in his own country»

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Today, in this fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, our liturgy again shows Jesus speaking at the synagogue at Nazareth. It is the continuation of last Sunday's Gospel, where Jesus was reading Isaiah's prophecy: «The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and announce the Lord's

year of mercy (...)» (Lk 4:18-19). And, when Jesus finishes the reading He avows: «Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen» (Lk 4:21).

The Gospel points out that they were lost in wonder while his lips spoke of the grace. Jesus was well known by the assembly —Jesus having spent his infancy and youth in Nazareth— but that did not help their accepting him as a prophet.

Nathanael said in this respect: «Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?» (Jn 1:46). Jesus reproaches them for their skepticism, and reminds them that: «No prophet is honored in his own country» (Lk 4:24). And He tells them about Elijah and Elisha, who accomplished miracles for foreigners but not for their fellow citizens.

On hearing him they become very violent. They even tried to throw him down the cliff. As for us, don't we think often enough that God's saving actions should be made more in accordance with our vainglorious criteria! Don't we feel insulted when He makes use of something we considered of little value? We would like a more spectacular God. But, this appears to be more like his tempter, (Satan), when from the pinnacle told Jesus: «If you are the Son of God, jump off!» (Lk 4:9).

But, Jesus Christ has revealed himself to us as a humble God: the Son of man «came not to be ministered unto, but to minister» (Mk 10:45). Let us imitate him. To save our souls we need not be like saint Xavier, patron of the Missions. The humble saint Therese of the infant Jesus is his companion, as she is also the patron saint of the missions...