

Monday 3rd of Lent

Gospel text (Lk 4,24-30): 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»

Fr. Higinio Rafael ROSOLEN IVE
(Cobourg, Ontario, Canada)

Today, in the Gospel, Jesus tells us that «no prophet is accepted in his hometown» (Lk 4:24). By making use of this proverb Jesus is introducing Himself as a prophet.

A "Prophet" is someone who speaks on behalf of another, he who carries someone else's message. Among the Hebrews, the prophets were men sent by God to announce, whether with words, whether with signs, the presence of God, the coming of the Messiah, the message of salvation, peace and hope.

Jesus is the Prophet par excellence, the long awaited Savior; in Him all prophecies are fulfilled. But, just as it did happen at the time of Elijah and Elisha, Jesus is not "well accepted" among their own, for those who are filled with anger «got up, and drew Him out of the town» (Lk 4:29).

Each one of us, because of our baptism, is also called to be a prophet. Therefore:

1st. We should announce the Good News. To do so, as Pope Francis said, we have to listen to the Word with a sincere approach, to let it touch our own lives, to let it retrieve us, exhort us, mobilize us, because if we do not dedicate time to pray with that Word, then we shall indeed be a "false prophet", a "swindler" or an "empty charlatan"

2nd. To live by the Gospel. Again Pope Francis says: «We are not asked to be flawless, but to keep growing and wanting to grow as we advance along the path of the Gospel; our arms must never grow slack». It is essential to be sure that God loves us, that Jesus Christ has saved us, that His love is forever.

3rd. As disciples of Jesus, we must be aware that just as Jesus experienced rejection, anger and being thrown out, this will also be present on the horizon of our daily lives.

Let Mary, Queen of the prophets, guide us on our way.

«No prophet is honored in his own country»

Fr. Santi COLLELL i Aguirre
(La Garriga, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we hear Our Lord saying that «No prophet is honored in his own country» (Lk 4:24). These words —uttered by Jesus— have been for many of us —more than once— justification and excuse not to complicate our lives. But, in fact, Jesus Christ, only wants to warn us, his disciples, that things are not as easy as they may look and, more often than not, amongst those supposedly knowing us best, things may still become more difficult.

Jesus' assertion is the preamble of the lesson He intends to give to the people gathered in the synagogue and thus, open their eyes to the evidence that, just because they are members of the “chosen People” they have no guarantee of salvation, cure or purification (which will later be confirmed through the data of the history of salvation).

I said, however, that Jesus' assertion, for most of us, is too often, but an excuse not to “commit ourselves evangelically” in our daily chores. Yes, it belongs to those phrases we have all learned by heart and, gosh!, are they effective...!

It seems those words are recorded in our particular conscience in such a way that, when we should, in the office, at work, with our family or with our friends, within our closer social “milieu”, be making decisions understandable only to the light of the Gospel, such “magic phrase” push us backwards as if advising us: —It is not worth your while to worry, no prophet is being honored in his own country! We have the perfect excuse, the very best of justifications, for not having to give testimony, nor having to stand by that colleague whom the company is playing a dirty trick on, nor having somehow to help reconciling that married couple, who are also friends of ours.

Saint Paul addressed, instead, in the first place, his own: «And going into the synagogue, he spoke freely about three months, disputing and persuading concerning the kingdom of God» (Acts 19:8). Are you sure, it is not actually this what Jesus meant to say to us?