

Friday of the Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 13:54-58): Jesus came to his native place and taught the people in their synagogue. They were astonished and said, "Where did this man get such wisdom and mighty deeds? Is he not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother named Mary and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? Are not his sisters all with us? Where did this man get all this?" And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and in his own house." And he did not work many mighty deeds there because of their lack of faith.

"A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and in his own house"

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Today, as yesterday, talking about God to those who have known us forever is difficult. In the case of Jesus, Saint John Chrysostom comments: "The people of Nazareth admire Him, but this admiration does not lead them to believe, but to feel envy, as if they were saying, 'Why Him and not me?'" Jesus knew well those who, instead of listening to Him, were scandalized by Him. They were relatives, friends, and neighbors whom He cherished, but it was precisely to them that He would not be able to convey His message of salvation.

We—who cannot perform miracles and do not possess the holiness of Christ—will not provoke envy (even though it may sometimes happen if we truly strive to live a Christian life). Be that as it may, we will often find, like Jesus, that those we love

or appreciate most are those who listen to us least. In this regard, we must also bear in mind that flaws are more visible than virtues, and that those who have been by our side for years may think to themselves: "You who did (or do) this or that, what are you going to teach me?"

Preaching or speaking about God among the people of our town or family is difficult but necessary. It goes without saying that when Jesus goes home, He is preceded by the fame of his miracles and his word. Perhaps we too will need, to a certain extent, to establish a certain reputation for holiness outside (and inside) our home before "preaching" to those at home.

Saint John Chrysostom adds in his commentary: "Consider, I beg you, the kindness of the Master: He does not chastise them for not listening to him but says gently: A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and in his own house' (Mt 13:57)." It's clear that Jesus would have left there sad, but He would have continued praying that his saving word would be well received by his people. And we (who have nothing to forgive or overlook) must also pray that Jesus' word may reach those we love, but who don't want to listen to us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Little faith can accomplish great things." (Saint John Chrysostom)
- "Faith blossoms when we let the Father draw us to Jesus, and we 'go to Him' with an open heart. And there we receive a gift, the gift of the faith." (Francis)
- "For a Christian, believing in God cannot be separated from believing in the One he sent, his 'beloved Son', in whom the Father is 'well pleased' (Cf. Mk 1:11); God tells us to listen to him (...) (Cf Mk 9:7)." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 151)