

Sunday July 4, 2021

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Parishioner Reflection

By: *Jonathan Tucker*

...the prophet is something quite different. His task is not to report on the events of tomorrow or the next day to satisfy human curiosity or the human need for security. He shows us the face of God, and in so doing he shows us the path that we have to take. (Pope Benedict XVI, Jesus of Nazareth)

The *many* in today's passage ask *...where did this man get all this? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands?*

Jesus shows, to the amazement of the *many*, the signs of his true origin and the real nature of his mission. God's power – incarnate in this mere *carpenter* - again appears. The "signs of credibility" of Christ's words and deeds powerfully point to his divine origins and invite those he encounters that day to faith. He invites them to leave behind the superficial niceties of Jesus as just neighbour (meaning life as usual) and receive the gift of Christ as Redeemer (meaning true change and conversion). Is the Lord looking to change me? To change my behaviour in some way, so I might live more by faith and charity as I listen to him through the gospel accounts? What will it take for me to be won over by his goodness?

The response of the *many* to Jesus? *And they took offence at him.* But how could they, I wonder? In the verses before this encounter, Mark has just recounted Jesus healing a woman who merely touched him in the midst of a crowd of people; out of desperation and faith. And then there was Jairus' 12-year-old daughter resurrected from death to the amazement and wonder of those present.

Through these encounters and the differing reactions to Jesus, we see that it is a grace to see God in the ordinariness of our day; to do so means to sacrifice our sense of self-sufficiency not to think of ourselves as the centre of our world. Or perhaps it is our vanity which distracts from seeing God. Or the comfort with our preconceived notions and ideas which distract from seeing God at work.

In this passage (as in the preceding passages) there are no neutral states. Those who reject Jesus' invitation to love are turned to love's

opposite—hatred and rejection. Little has changed over time. Today we witness the same reaction and result, to Jesus at work, in those around us. So, we pray for those we encounter throughout our day; that they may be given the grace to see God in the ordinariness of their day and in us.

He was not able to perform any mighty deed there: Jesus made himself vulnerable to those he addressed that day. He continues to make himself vulnerable to us. Elsewhere in the gospels we read of Jesus, *I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.* He wants to bring his power into our life; to heal us from ourselves. To remove fear and share our burdens. To treat our wounds and bring relief. But to do this requires our faith in him. Without our willingness and permission, he will not act. How sad it is when he is not able to perform any mighty deed in or through me because of my own unwillingness.

Lord, we love you and want to be an example to those around us, through our faith and conviction that you are the life of all.