



Bringing Home the Word

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
July 4, 2021

The Pain of Suspicion

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

A bright and luminous painting from 1905 by Maurice Denis shows the Child Jesus in Nazareth, apparently teaching the other children. *Nazareth* highlights the peace, beauty, and joy of those years when Jesus was growing in wisdom and strength right before Mary's eyes.

The little dovelike white ribbons on the heads of the kneeling children indicate the knowledge and spirit Jesus was imparting.

Yet when Jesus returns to Nazareth as an adult, things were quite different. The townspeople were suspicious of

his wisdom as they remember him as the carpenter, son of Joseph and Mary. Those humble roots don't justify the knowledge and power with which he spoke. Perhaps envy or jealousy blinded them and brought Jesus to quote the Old Testament, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house" (Mark 6:4).

Their closed hearts pained Jesus, as he would have most certainly wanted to show all the love and power of God to his fellow Nazoreans. Scripture says Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith.

We can also limit everything Jesus wants to do in and for us with our lack of belief in him and his power. Perhaps those of us who are closest to him through daily prayer and regular sacraments are the least convinced of his power. Dare to let Jesus in and do with you what he wants! +

Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 2:2-5

Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ.

Mark 6:1-6

Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary?...He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Perhaps those who are closest to Jesus through prayer and regular sacraments are the least convinced of his power.

A Word from Pope Francis

[Religious] freedom remains one of America's most precious possessions. And, as my brothers, the United States Bishops, have reminded us, all are called to be vigilant, precisely as good citizens, to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it.

—Visit to the White House, September 23, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Does my familiarity with Jesus lead me to routine and lack of faith?
- In what ways have I seen Jesus work and answer prayer?

Are “Those People” Us?

By Kathleen M. Basi

You would think that in a society that prizes knowledge—in a world shaped by the ability to study the microscopic building blocks of the human person—we would have moved beyond defining people by stereotypes. Yet reality indicates otherwise. It’s a sad truth about human nature that we are really good at building walls to divide *us* from *them* and not nearly as good at breaking those walls down.

Forwarded emails, written in inflammatory language, make blanket statements about Muslims, Protestants, Catholics, liberals, and conservatives. Neighbors protest in response to a home being built nearby for underprivileged kids or disabled adults. We make assumptions about people’s character based on the way they dress, their political affiliation, or physical characteristics.

We’d all like to think we’re the exception to such subtle bigotry. We’d like to think we respect the gift of life in whatever form God gives it—disabilities and all—but how many of us answer questions about our unborn children with “as long as the baby’s healthy” or forward emails of poor taste?

We readily admit that “those people” (whoever they may be) are just as important as we are in the eyes of God. But when it comes to making out birthday invitations for our children’s celebrations or expanding our own social



circles, does our gaze automatically slide past certain individuals to people who feel a little more...well...like us?

When we separate people into *us* versus *them*, we give ourselves permission, however unconsciously, to see *them* as *less than*. Jesus asks more from us. In one Gospel story after another, he challenges us to tear down the barriers erected by humanity.

We know that Jesus came for everyone—it’s a tenet of our faith. It’s a lot easier to say those words, though, than to acknowledge that our hearts aren’t opened as wide as Jesus’. Saint Paul urged the Galatians not to consider themselves as Jew or Greek, slave or free,

male or female (see Galatians 3:28). A modern litany might speak to religion, race, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

It’s not easy to overcome our biases. But nobody ever said following Jesus would be easy. In fact, Jesus made it clear that the Christian journey involves dying to oneself. What also must die is our own unacknowledged prejudices. +

We’d all like to think we’re the exception to subtle bigotry.

**PRAYER**

Lord, you accept everyone with unconditional love. Help me overcome my fear of others so I can love and accept them as you do.

—From *Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 5–10

Monday, Weekday:
Gn 28:10–22a / Mt 9:18–26

Tuesday, Weekday:
Gn 32:23–33 / Mt 9:32–38

Wednesday, Weekday:
Gn 41:55–57; 42:5–7a, 17–24a / Mt 10:1–7

Thursday, Weekday: Gn 44:18–21, 23b–29; 45:1–5 / Mt 10:7–15

Friday, Weekday:
Gn 46:1–7, 28–30 / Mt 10:16–23

Saturday, Weekday: Gn 49:29–32; 50:15–26a / Mt 10:24–33

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