



14th Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year B)



Mark 6: 1 – 6

Jesus came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offence at him.

Then Jesus said to them, “A Prophet is not without honour, except in his hometown, and among his own kin, and in his own house.”

And Jesus could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And Jesus was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching.



Reflection:

There was nothing about Jesus’ childhood that was extraordinary, in so far as his own relatives and friends in Nazareth were concerned. His fame throughout the region, the stories they had heard told and the wisdom he spoke must come as a surprise to them. Instead of being proud of Jesus and his teaching, they are jealous of him and reject him. They speak of him, and the way he was born out of wedlock, in a negative way, trying to reduce his importance to them.



Table Discussion (at mealtime):

“How do you react to the success and achievements of your brothers and sisters (or your closest friends)?”

Storytime

The Chosen One of God (Bedtime story):

Once upon a time, there was a monastery that had fallen into ruin. Where once it had been alive with the footsteps of many monks working and praying together, side by side, for the greater glory of God, its halls and rooms were now almost empty, except for a few elderly monks and their Abbot.

“What shall we do?” the Abbott asked, as he knelt to God in prayer. “The young have grown old and have not been replaced. It has been years since anyone has asked to join our ranks, and we are now too few and too old to look after the monastery and its many grounds.” And, in his desperation, the Abbott let out a big sigh.

The answer came a few days later when, on trying to fix the fence that separated the monastery grounds from the road, the Rabbi came by to speak to him. “How are you doing?” the Rabbi began. “Are you so short of men, that you must do the work yourself?” “It has come to that,” the Abbott replied. “If things don’t change soon, this monastery will close.”

“I hope it won’t come to that,” the Rabbi said. “After all, this monastery has had a long and fabled history in this area. It would be hard to imagine a day when it no longer exists. It would also come as somewhat of a shock to my wife, who just yesterday was told in prayer that within the very walls of your community resides the Chosen One of God.”

The Abbott was shocked, and outwardly he laughed. There had been times, when he was young, that the monastery was full of great men, inspired by the lives of Abbots and monks from years gone by. Back then it seemed as if God’s Chosen One was present in their midst. But, not now, when one by one these men had died, leaving only a handful of tired souls behind.

But as much as he tried to laugh at the idea, it would not leave him. What if the Rabbi’s dream was true? What if the Chosen One of God was living among them? But who could it be? He began to wonder. Could it be Brother Bruce, the man of prayer, whose every word is addressed to God, or Brother Ed, the handyman, who’s always ready to share his talents? Could it be Brother Steve, the man of books, whose knowledge and insight are second to none, or Brother Reginald, the kitchen help, whose life is spent in humble service? A case could be made for each of them, each for a particular reason and gift that was uniquely theirs. “I know what I’ll do,” he finally concluded. “I’ll share the news with everyone and see what they think.”

That evening, as they gathered together after evening prayer, the Abbott shared what the Rabbi had told him. As expected, one or two laughed, while others shook their heads in disbelief. They, too, struggled with the whole idea. Was it even possible?

And yet, something changed in the way they lived together. They began to treat one another with greater respect and greater love, just in case that particular brother was the Chosen One of God. And, as the way they treated one another began to change, the life of the community began to grow. It no longer seemed like a community that was going to die, but a community that was very much alive with songs of thanksgiving, hard work and prayer. Laughter could once again be heard in their halls.

Soon the townspeople and those in the surrounding countryside began to notice. The monastery was filled with new life and joy. Young men began to drop by and visit for a week or two, some even came to volunteer their help. It wasn’t long before the first few men decided to stay and join the monastery for the rest of their lives. All because a few old monks had dared to believe that the chosen One of God was one of them and, by doing so, began to live their life in a wonderful new way.



St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen (A bedtime Story):

There is much to say about the greatness of these two men, each of whom could easily receive a date on the Christian Calendar all on their own. Great was their influence when it comes to the teachings of the Christian faith, great was their influence as important bishops of their time and great their accomplishments, especially in the area of early monastic movements.

But let us leave all these things aside and talk about what brings them together and the reason why their lives are celebrated on the same day. It was their friendship that brought them together and it was their friendship that gave them the ability to do what they did.

They first met as youths entering university. They were like two streams coming together to form one river, brothers not by birth but by common interest. They each had a great passion for learning and a great love for Christ. They never spoke of themselves, but only of the other. They took less pride in their own work and accomplishments, than they did in the work and successes of the other. Basil couldn't stop talking about how great Gregory was, and Gregory couldn't stop talking about how great his friend Basil was. Whereas schools are often filled with students comparing themselves to one another, Basil and Gregory showed no jealousy, but only admiration for the other.

"Have you heard what my brother Basil has done?" Gregory would say. "Have you read what my Brother Gregory has written?" Basil would ask the same classmates not long after. They saw the best in the other, and they made sure to bring it out. This is the true definition of a friend, and this is what bound them together as brothers in Christ



Parenting Corner: Things that require faith:

"Jesus could do no deed of power there," because of their unbelief. "except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them." How much are you open to the work of Christ in your family? It might be good to take stock. Though we might think that Christ has passed us by, maybe we need to look at the level of faith in our homes and ask ourselves the question, "Are we offering Christ an opening or an opportunity to teach, to heal and to reside with us, or are we expecting him to hammer down our closed doors and shatter our shuttered windows?"

A handy checklist:

- Do we give any thought to Christ in the decisions we make? Do we bring them to prayer?
- Do we give him opportunities to teach us, heal us, forgive us and transform us?
- Do we call on his healing, forgiveness or transformation of others and how are we open to be instruments of his healing, forgiveness and transformation in others?
- Do we believe that Christ can make a difference in our lives and in the lives of others? How do we put that faith into action?
- Are we willing to commit to walking with Jesus and accompanying others on the road to greater faith and healing? What would that look like in the case of our family/the people we know?
- How do we support God's Call in our own children, in helping them give their all to Him?



Joseph and his Brothers (a bedtime story):

Israel had twelve sons and, of them all, he loved Joseph most. One day Israel gave Joseph a special coat with long sleeves and many colours. When his brothers saw the coat, they grew jealous and began to hate their brother. After all, their father had never once given them so great a gift.

Their hatred grew even greater when one day Joseph shared a dream he had. "We were all in the fields, gathering the wheat into sheaves," he began. "When lo and behold, the sheaves that you had gathered stood up and bowed before the sheaf that I had gathered." "I had a second dream," Joseph continued, "This time it was of eleven stars, the sun and the moon bowing their heads before my star in heaven." You could well imagine the result; his brothers were furious with Joseph.

One day, while the brothers were out tending the sheep far from home, Israel sent Joseph to give them a message. On seeing Joseph approach, his brothers began to speak of their jealousy towards him. "There's our brother, the dreamer," said one of them. "Thinks he's better than us," said another. "Has the coat to prove it," chimed in the third. "Let's teach him a lesson," suggested the fourth.

On drawing near to them, Joseph was surrounded on every side. "Well, well, well," said one of them. "What have we here?" Asked a second. "Have you come to visit your brothers?" chimed in the third. "So nice to see you step down from your throne," added the fourth. And, with those words, they seized Joseph by his hands and feet, stripped him of his coat of long sleeves and many colours, and threw him into a pit. "I wonder who will bow to whom now?" One of the brothers asked, and they all laughed at him.

A little later, as the brothers were sitting down for lunch, a band of slave traders were passing by. "Where are you off to?" Asked one of the brothers. "We are heading to Egypt to sell our slaves," the traders replied. "How much are they worth, and is their room for one more?" Asked another. "Thirty silver pieces is what we pay, and we are always looking for more." On hearing that, Joseph's brothers hauled Joseph out of the pit and sold him into slavery. "If we are going to get rid of him," said one brother to the others, "we might as well get paid for it, and get rid of him for good."

Once in Egypt, Joseph was sold to a wealthy man named Potiphar. Joseph served him so well that Potiphar put him in charge of his entire household. One day, however, while Potiphar was gone on business, Potiphar's wife began to show great affection towards Joseph. The type of affection that should have been reserved to Potiphar alone. When Joseph refused to have any part of her affection, she began to hate him and, in her anger, Potiphar's wife had him thrown into jail.

Once in jail, Joseph befriended the jailer. He also made friends with many of those who had been unjustly condemned. They brought him their troubles, their concerns and their dreams. He showed an exceptional understanding of all things, especially their dreams, a gift that could only come from God.

When the King's Steward had been pardoned, as Joseph had predicted through the interpretation of a dream, Joseph was brought before the King himself, to interpret two dreams the King had had.

"Seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of drought", this was Joseph's reply to Pharaoh. "During the seven years of plenty be sure to save up as much food as you can, so that, when drought and famine strike, you have food enough and to spare." The King was so impressed with what Joseph said, he made him Second only to the King and gave him control over all the food in Egypt.

That's when Joseph's brothers came calling. They had nothing left to eat. They bowed before him, not recognizing their brother, and begged him for food to eat. So be careful how you treat your brother, you can never be sure of how the story will end. Just as they sold Joseph into slavery and crucified Christ, we often regret what we've done to the ones we reject.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXzDo70R57c>