

14th Ordinary Sunday B

Ezk 2:2-5
2 Cor 12:7-10
Mk 6:1-6

Dr. Seuss was a great writer of children's books who lived in the last century. He wrote many well-known books such as "The Cat in the Hat," "Green Eggs and Ham," and so on. His writing career would have ended if he had not shown great determination. His first book was rejected 24 times before it was finally published. Rejection is hard to take. Rejection is heart breaking when it is from people whom we love and people who are near and dear to us. Jesus experienced the pain of that kind of rejection as we heard in the Gospel of today. The people of Jesus' home town rejected him. People with whom he grew up refused to believe in Him. Perhaps the saddest line in the gospel of today is that Jesus could not perform any mighty deeds in Nazareth because of their lack of faith. The people of Nazareth rejected the message because the messenger was someone who grew up with them. They knew his family and parents, so they rejected Him.

In the Old Testament we see that most prophets feared rejection or failure. Israel had a history of rejecting the prophets. Ezekiel was sent to a people who rebelled against him. Jeremiah was threatened with death several times. Rejection can lead people to some evil ways. There was this fellow who became disabled after an accident. Gradually he began to feel that his wife did not love him because he was disabled. So he began to drink. Soon he became addicted to alcohol, but he tried to hide it from his wife. One day he was in the bar and drank too much. He got up to go home, but he could not stand. He tried again, but he could not stand on his legs. So he crawled to the door and got out of the bar. He tried to stand on his legs but could not. His home was only a couple of blocks away. So he thought he could crawl and get home. He did. When he got to the door of his home, he tried to stand but could not, so he crawled in and got into bed. The next morning his wife asked him if he was drinking last night. But he said, "No." His wife said, "Don't lie to me. The bar owner just called up and said that you left your wheel chair there last night."

The word of God suffers persecution even today. Speaking of the Gospel is a risky business even today. It results in arrest, persecution and murder in Communist and Islamic countries. Insulting the Christian faith, especially the Catholic faith, repeatedly happens in developed countries in the name of freedom of speech. More than 600 missionaries have been martyred in the last decade. Hundreds of Christians have been killed in the past year in Indonesia, the Philippines, Sudan, Nigeria, Egypt, Iraq, India, and so on. The Catholic Church has been under attack in every part of the world. It is because the Catholic Church is the moral conscience of the world. Truth is found there. Only fruit bearing trees will receive stones. At our Baptism, we are anointed to be priest, prophet, and king. So we have a call to be prophets in the world. The task of a prophet is to speak God's truth. We should not remain silent and hide truth by being politically correct. We just celebrated the Fourth of July. True freedom comes from knowing the truth. Jesus said truth will set you free. Anyone can take away our freedom only by hiding the truth or spreading lies. Where there is truth, there is freedom. Let us acknowledge the truth found in the Gospel, and do not be afraid to stand for that truth.