

# THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 28, 2007

Jer 1:4-5, 17-19; 1Cor 12:31-13:13; Lk 4:21-30

Homilist: S. Mary Agnes Lanthier, OP

The readings for this Sunday are rich and challenging. But after listening to St. Paul's beautiful hymn to love, who needs to listen to a homily on the Second Reading?

The First Reading and the Gospel for this Sunday seem to complete each other: "Stand up and tell them all that I command. Do not be crushed on their account as though I would leave you crushed before them...for I am with you to deliver you."(Jer 1:4-5,-17-19) These words spoken by God to Jeremiah give light and strength to Jesus when He was rejected by His own relatives and people of Nazareth.

After He had read the quotation from Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth, He proclaimed to the congregation, "Today this Scripture Passage is fulfilled in your hearing". In that passage, Isaiah speaks of all that the Spirit of the Lord would accomplish in the Messiah. Jesus knew that the passage referred to Him.

Although His hearers had praised His wisdom and were amazed at the miracles He was performing especially for those in need (as Isaiah had predicted) many refused to accept Him as the Messiah. Did the words of Jeremiah come to Him then? Jesus knew His Scripture, and He boldly stood His ground. He reminded them of Elijah, the prophet who was sent to help the poor widow of the land of Sidon—he was not sent to the Jews. He reminded them of the prophet Elisha who cured the leper Naaman the Syrian— not a Jew. In other words, He let them know that God favored the Gentiles who obeyed the prophets of Israel, unlike their ancestors of His present hearers who refused to accept their prophets or killed them.

His hearers knew the Scriptures, and they got the point. Because of their fury at having their lack of faith in Him exposed (in spite of the fact that He was openly fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah) they attempted to kill Him.

Jesus is human, like us in all things. He must at first been overwhelmed with fear. Knowing His Scripture, He knew where to find light and strength, Did He recall with some relief the words of His Father to Jeremiah, "As though I would leave you crushed before them...for I am with you to deliver you."

Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.