

30 JANUARY 2022

Sunday Message

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • Season Colour: Green • Psalter Week 4

WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?!

(LUKE 4:21-30)

There is a somewhat peculiar contrast in the reaction of the Nazareth people to Jesus in our Gospel reading today.

Jesus has set out his programme for ministry in terms of the prophet Isaiah and this won the approval of all those who heard it. It is not so much Jesus' local origins as "the son of Joseph" which causes the consternation and change of attitude as his declaration that his message is not for one privileged group, but for all people.

The two incidents to which Jesus refers apply to the prophet Elijah and his disciple and successor Elisha. Both the widow at Zarephath and the Syrian military officer Naaman were Gentiles. The implication is that Capernaum is also to some extent foreign territory: the townsfolk are depicted as expecting Jesus to perform such works in a properly Jewish setting. What seems to enrage them is the notion that Gentiles can share in the good news that Jesus brings. They are intent on doing away with him, but he somehow eludes them and escapes.

Thus at the outset of Jesus ministry, we find that he is rejected by the very people who should have embraced him and his message. This theme will recur through Luke's two-volume book, the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles. ■



Aerial image of old city houses of Nazareth

SAY

The Spirit lives to set us free and binds us all in unity: walk, walk in the light.

(Damian Lundy)

DO

Think about how your parish can welcome those who feel rejected – and see what you can do to draw them into the community.



LEARN

The stories of Elijah and Elisha are found in the books of Kings.

There are echoes of the stories of these two prophets in Luke's presentation of Jesus as prophet.

Capernaum is the town on the shore of the Lake of Galilee which Jesus makes the base for his ministry when he leaves Nazareth.

REFLECT

The theme runs through the Gospel tradition that Jesus' message is for all people and not restricted to any one particular group. We may understand this easily enough in terms of the split between Judaism and Christianity: this bitter quarrel is reflected in the writings of the New Testament, the Christian Scriptures.

But the Scriptures are addressed to us today, in our time and place. Perhaps we are being asked today if there are people who are considered beyond the pale: are there groups who are regarded as not acceptable to the community for one reason or another? Who are told that they are not welcome at the Eucharist? And why? What about gay people? Those whose married life did not turn out as they had hoped and find themselves barred from the sacraments? What is the good news as far as they are concerned?

One thing apparently not realised, or perhaps overlooked, is that the only people affected by the official rulings are those to whom the church matters, to whom the Eucharist and the sacraments are important. There are some who attend Mass weekly but do not receive Communion because their situation is deemed unacceptable. In today's Gospel episode, the townsfolk of Nazareth rise up violently against Jesus because he points out that the prophets Elijah and Elisha ministered in remarkable ways to people who were outside the nation of Israel: he says that his ministry is along the same lines, to those who will accept him and his message. Salvation is for all, especially those most in need.

Who are most in need of the love of God today? Who feel excluded by the church? What would Jesus do? ■

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time – 30th January 2022

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim
Fri 7:30pm Dromara

Recently deceased Eileen Savage, Clonvaraghan Rd

Anniversary Masses

Dechomet

Sat 29th Mickey Turley

Leitrim

Sat 29th Michael Murphy

Sat 5th Fr Jim Mooney
Patsy McGlue

Dromara

Sun 30th Dan, Mary, Liam Marmion and Deceased
Family Members

Frank, Mary and Patrick Galbraith

Fri 4th Winnie and Gerry Dunniece

Sun 6th Peter McEvoy and Martin Doyle
Kathleen O'Hare

Prayer to St Brigid

You were a woman of peace.

You brought harmony where there was conflict.

You brought light to the darkness.

You brought hope to the downcast.

May the mantle of your peace cover those who are
troubled and anxious, and may peace be firmly
rooted in our hearts and in our world.

Inspire us to act justly and to reverence all God has
made.

Brigid, you were a voice for the wounded and the
weary.

Strengthen what is weak within us.

Calm us into a quietness that heals and listens.

May we grow each day into greater wholeness in
mind, body and spirit.

Amen

Sick and housebound will be attended on week
beginning 6th Feb. If anyone would prefer that I do
not call, just let me know. If a person wishes to be
added onto the list, please ring me.

Collections	Dromara	Drumgooland
Parish	£188	£784

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Robbie
Doyle

God's Word

Uncomfortable truths

In his preaching and teaching, Jesus makes it clear
that if we are to belong to him we must treat
everyone with compassion and mercy.

Indeed, given the clarity of Jesus' teaching, one
would expect compassion and mercy to be the
distinguishing characteristics of every Christian.

Unfortunately, we know that's not true. The Jewish
people of Jesus' time were not the only ones to
neglect this teaching. Modern Christians neglect it
too. Ask a Traveller, a refugee, a homeless person or
any excluded member of our society, and they will
tell you they are not always received with the
compassion and mercy the Gospel demands.

In Shakespeare's play The Merchant of Venice,
Shylock asks why a Christian can mock and exclude
a Jew like him. He protests that Jews are not too
different from Christians: "Hath not a Jew eyes?
Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses,
affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt
with the same weapons? Subject to the same
diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and
cooled by the same winter and summer, as a
Christian is?"

That's the message Jesus constantly hammers home.
It's about being a neighbour to all without exclusion.
He reminds us that as Christians we can never be
rugged individuals. If we do not care for our
neighbour, if we live for ourselves without heed to
others, then we are living a life cut off from God.