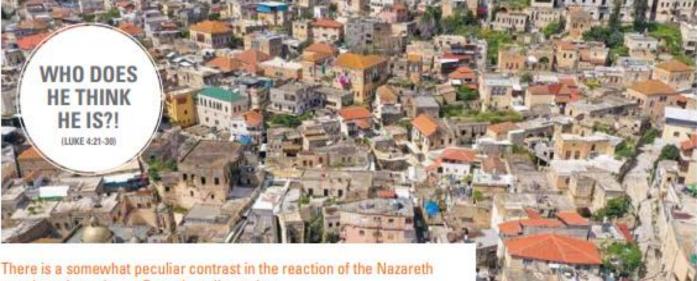
THE WORD

Year C • Season Colour: Green • Psalter Week 4



Aerial image of old city houses of 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 twovolume book, the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles.

REFLECT

he 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 guarrel 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?

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.

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 DromaraWed 7:30pm LeitrimFri 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.