

## **Homily of 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B (July 8, 2018)**

The three readings present to us the rejection experiences of Ezekiel, St. Paul and Jesus. In the first reading, the Israelites were hard of face and obstinate of heart and did not listen to Ezekiel. The second reading narrates St. Paul's experiences of insults, hardship, persecution, and constraints while he preached the Good News. In the Gospel Jesus was rejected by his own people. "They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him."

It is not different now than the times of Ezekiel, St. Paul and Jesus. By God's grace the humanity's level of civilization is amazing. Despite this, there is so much sadness, anger, division, violence and destruction in many parts of the world. This is because God is no longer playing the central role in the way of life of many men and women. There is so much resistance and rejection of religion and faith. Many people are hard of face and obstinate of heart when it concerns faith and religion. They feel offended at religion and faith. While every political, social and economic issues are easily promoted, religion and faith are constrained.

One of the most bizarre comments I heard recently was that baptism of children is against the children's human right. Someone made mockery of the comment by saying that children's diapers should not be changed because it is against their human right! In Matthew 19:14 Jesus says, "Let the children come to me, do not prevent them..."

It is easy to spend time talking about those who resent religion and faith, but how does this concern those of us who are believers? We are hard of face and obstinate of heart when we refuse correction. It is a sign of humility and a sign of growth to accept correction no matter where it comes from. There are people, not only that they refuse correction, they set out to persecute the source of the correction.

The people in the Gospel looked down on Jesus and took offense at him. Do we do the same to one another? It is a sign of hard of face and obstinate of heart to query the source of one's correction, "Who do you think you are to tell me what to do." God does not speak to us direct from heaven. He uses people around us to speak to us. Sometimes we claim that God is silent. Those times we say that God is silent are most likely the times we did not listen to the person or persons through whom God spoke to us.

Finally, in the second reading St. Paul used a parable to describe an affliction the Lord did not take away from him despite his pleading. Rather, the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness. When our experience is like that of St. Paul, when the Lord does not grant our desires, we do not despair, rather, we pray for the Lord's sufficient grace so that we may follow God's directions. Our hope lies in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it."

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