

Readings Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 12: 31-13:13; Luke 4: 21-30



Fr Michael says:

Rejecting the Prophet

Jesus experiences what a lot of us might have done, rejection of what he was because people think they know us! Jeremiah did not want to be a prophet and was overcome at the prospect – he seems to fail at it, a model for what Jesus experienced! The reaction of the congregation after his homily, especially on hearing that what they had rejected was to be offered to the Gentiles, is strong, they want to stone Him! His time has not yet come, though and He leaves them!

Jesus had outgrown His town, in what had happened to Him. Nelson Mandela experienced the same thing when he returned home after a long time: his home village has stayed the same, “...but I realised that my own outlook and world views had evolved” Despite being the best people to know Jesus, as He had grown up among them, His people have no faith in Him!

If ever you go on pilgrimage to Chartres, you see the Cathedral in the distance, quite splendid in its setting; it is only when you get closer to it you see the grime and the cracks. Something similar happens to us if we try and show another way of thinking and acting than they would have expected, because they are close to us, they can see the grime and cracks in us! If we are further away from them, then we could appear as heroes! Something worse happens to Jesus, going well beyond this – His ultimate rejection! They could not stand being told that the Gentiles were more accepting of His message than they were, they could not see that God’s promises are open to all.

Jesus ultimate motivation was compassion. He could turn away and leave them or He could see what they wanted and once He had found that out, proceed to give it to them, but if He did that then the special gift He wished to give them would be lost to them. He chose instead to work with the few who expressed an interest and openness to what He was saying. Jesus did not feel saddened by this, He came to terms with it, by realising that it is those who are simple and open-hearted who really can understand what He is saying and seeking to share with them. He left what He could and went elsewhere.

Jesus was never in a hurry, and was always kindness itself. He never envied anyone or boasted about Himself. He was never snobbish, rude or selfish or took offence easily. He did not keep on going over the bad things people did, He preferred to remember the good things and to rejoice in them. He was tough, He could face anything – He never lost trust in God, or in people. He never lost hope or gave in: He never stopped loving the errant children they often were and are!