

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 2



EYES WIDE OPEN

MARK 6:1-6

They couldn't believe what they were witnessing. Here was the carpenter's son holding forth in the synagogue, preaching as if he were a rabbi, instructing as if he considered himself an expert.

But they knew who he was. They knew his family. They knew his father's carpenter's shop. He was an ordinary Nazarene, one of their own. So where did he get all this wisdom? How could he talk with such authority? Who did he think he was, anyway, to come home, acting like some big shot?

So they wouldn't – couldn't – accept him. They saw him only as the boy next door. Filled with envy and incredulity, they refused to see who he really was.

His neighbours should have known that God was working through Jesus in a special way, that there was something unique and different about this extraordinary young man. But familiarity breeds contempt. They couldn't see past their expectations and prejudices. They were unable to see God's presence in the ordinary and the familiar. Jesus had no choice but to walk away. ■

REFLECT

One of the success stories of the 2010s was the taxi firm Uber. Founded in California in 2009, the ride-sharing start-up, with its user-friendly app and cheap fares, was a darling of the tech industry with a huge valuation on Wall Street.

In December 2016, a software engineer called Susan Fowler quit her job at Uber. Early the following year, she wrote an explosive blog about her time with the firm. She described how she was harassed at Uber, starting with her first day on a new team. When she complained, her bosses ignored her or tried to intimidate her. Fowler's allegations exposed a widespread culture of harassment at Uber. Its chief executive was forced to resign, its value fell, and the broader tech industry had to confront its woeful history of discrimination against women and minorities.

Susan Fowler helped ignite the MeToo movement, which highlights sexual harassment of women in the workplace. The culture of abuse of power and white male supremacy is so pervasive that

many people are unable or unwilling to see it. Some months ago, the head of the United Nations declared that gender inequality and discrimination against women is the "one overwhelming injustice across the globe – an abuse that is crying out for attention. Everywhere women are worse off than men, simply because they are women." Women are far more likely to be sexually assaulted, discriminated against, or aborted, simply because of their gender. A glaring injustice that many ignore or refuse to see.

At Uber, many people saw the way Susan Fowler was treated but they looked away. They refused to see. They didn't want to be involved. It can happen with us too. Even with perfectly good eyes, we can fail to see, or be oblivious to, so much of what is happening around us. We can be blind.

Blindness takes many forms. We can be so busy today that we simply don't have time to step back, look around, take note. Busyness prevents us from taking a closer look.

SAY

"Deepen my faith, Lord. Keep me always faithful to you. Amen."

DO

Make a conscious effort to be more alert to what is happening around you. Are there any ways in which you are blind?

LEARN

To be a prophet is to witness to the Gospel at all times.

Being a prophet is part and parcel of being a Christian.

The Christian is always tuned in to the signs of the times.

PRAY

Pray for the courage to oppose wrongdoing or discrimination wherever you see it. Pray for the courage to witness to the Good News without fear as Jesus did.

We can be so caught up in the regular routine of life, so stuck in our ways, that we fail to notice the signs of the times. Oblivious to the Holy Spirit at work in us and around us, we end up blinkered.

Or, like Jesus' townspeople, we can stubbornly refuse to see what is happening right in front of us, refuse to accept the evidence of our eyes – such as the opioid crisis, for example, or the problem of homelessness, or the family member or colleague in distress. Or the judgemental way we look down on the newcomer, the foreigner, the refugee.

We can refuse to acknowledge the challenges confronting our Church or claim they are none of our business.

Sometimes it's easier to be wilfully blind rather than face up to reality, to stay in the darkness rather than see with new eyes. But the Christian is called to see as Jesus sees and then always to respond, with courage, conviction and love. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Your merciful love, O God,
we have received in the midst of your temple.
Your praise, O God, like your name,
reaches the ends of the earth;
your right hand is filled with saving justice.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in the abasement of your Son
have raised up a fallen world,
fill your faithful with holy joy,
for on those you have rescued from slavery
to sin
you bestow eternal gladness.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Ezekiel 2:2-5

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.

The spirit came into me and made me stand up, and I heard the Lord speaking to me. He said, "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebels who have turned against me. Till now they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me. The sons are defiant and obstinate; I am sending you to them, to say, 'The Lord says this.' Whether they listen or not, this set of rebels shall know there is a prophet among them."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 122

Response:

**Our eyes are on the Lord
till he show us his mercy.**

1. To you have I lifted up my eyes,
you who dwell in the heavens:
my eyes, like the eyes of slaves
on the hand of their lords. (R.)

2. Like the eyes of a servant
on the hand of his mistress,
so our eyes are on the Lord our God
till he show us his mercy. (R.)

3. Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
We are filled with contempt.
Indeed all too full is our soul
with the scorn of the rich,
with the proud man's disdain. (R.)

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, to stop me from getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and stop me from getting too proud! About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said, "My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness." So I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me, and that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
The Word was made flesh and lived among us;
to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God.
Alleluia

GOSPEL Mark 6:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, "Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us?" And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house"; and he could work no miracle there, though he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this oblation dedicated to your name
purify us, O Lord,
and day by day bring our conduct
closer to the life of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed the man who seeks refuge in him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that, having been replenished by such great
gifts,
we may gain the prize of salvation
and never cease to praise you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Unless we look at a person and see the beauty that is in them, we can contribute nothing to them. One does not help a person by discerning what is wrong, what is ugly, what is distorted. Christ looked at everyone he met, at the prostitute, at the thief, and saw the beauty hidden there. Perhaps it was distorted, perhaps damaged, but it was beauty none the less, and what he did was to call out this beauty.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

