

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time – February 3, 2019 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

The word of the LORD came to me, saying: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. But do you gird your loins; stand up and tell them all that I command you. Be not crushed on their account, as though I would leave you crushed before them; for it is I this day who have made you a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of brass, against the whole land: against Judah's kings and princes, against its priests and people. They will fight against you but not prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17

(cf. 15ab) **I will sing of your salvation.**

In you, O LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

In your justice rescue me, and deliver me;
incline your ear to me, and save me.

Be my rock of refuge,
a stronghold to give me safety,
for you are my rock and my fortress.
O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked.

For you are my hope, O Lord;
my trust, O God, from my youth.
On you I depend from birth;
from my mother's womb you are my strength.

My mouth shall declare your justice,
day by day your salvation.
O God, you have taught me from my youth,
and till the present I proclaim your wondrous deeds.

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13

Brothers and sisters: Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in human and angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous, it is not pompous,
It is not inflated, it is not rude,
it does not seek its own interests,
it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury,
it does not rejoice over wrongdoing
but rejoices with the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.

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Prayer

Father, help me to let go of my desire
to get back at those who have hurt me,
taken advantage of me or slighted me
in some way. Not only does it hurt
the other person, it hurts me.
Let me leave the judgment in your hands.
May I only desire to honor and please you.
The rest is yours.
In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

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Reflection

God's words in today's First Reading point us beyond Jeremiah to Jesus. Like Jeremiah, Jesus was consecrated in the womb and sent as a "prophet to the nations" (see Luke 1:31–33). Like the prophets before Him, Jesus too faces hostility. In today's Gospel, the crowd in His hometown synagogue quickly turns on Him, apparently demanding a sign, some proof of divine origins—that He's more than just "the son of Joseph." The sign He gives them is that of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha. From their colorful careers Jesus draws two stories. In each, the prophets bypass "many . . . in Israel" to bestow God's blessings on non-Israelites who had faith that the prophets were men of God (see 1 Kings 17:1–16; 2 Kings 5:1–14). "None . . . not one" in Israel was found deserving, Jesus emphasizes.

His point isn't lost on His audience. They know He's likening them to the "many . . . in Israel" in the days of the prophets. That's why they try to shove Him off the cliff. As He promised to protect Jeremiah, the Lord delivers Jesus from those who would crush Him. And as were Elijah and Elisha, Jesus is sent to proclaim God's gift of salvation—not exclusively to one nation or people, but to all who realize in faith that from the womb God alone is their hope, their rescuer, their "rock of refuge," as we sing in today's Psalm.

Prophecies, Paul tells us in today's Epistle, are partial and pass away "when the perfect comes." In Jesus, the word of the prophets has been brought to perfection, fulfilled in those who have ears to hear, as He declares in today's Gospel. Greater than the gifts of faith and hope, Jesus shows us how to love as He loved—to love God as our Father, as the one who formed us in the womb and destined us to hear His saving Word. This is the salvation, the "mighty works of the Lord," that we, like the psalmist, are thankful to proclaim daily in the Eucharist.

-Scott Hahn, PhD

Questions for Reflection

First Reading:

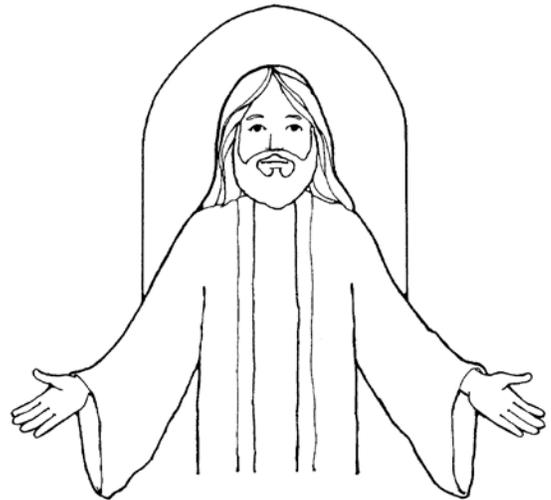
What does this passage say about the creative, or re-creative, will of God?

Second Reading:

What are the "childish ways" to which Paul is referring?

Gospel:

1. How do you feel when someone points out an area of deficiency in your life?
2. How do you think the people felt when Jesus "passing through the midst of them went away"? What are the ramifications of his doing this?
3. Looking ahead to the coming year, how would you like your spiritual life to be different? What decision(s) can you make now that will enable these changes to take place?



Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and
snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of
souls. Amen.