

SCC REFLECTION: 4th Sunday Year C. Lk. Fr Donal McIlraith

Luke Text. Lk 4:22-30.

[22] And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; and they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

[23] And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Caper'na-um, do here also in your own country.'"

[24] And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country.

[25] But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Eli'jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land;

[26] and Eli'jah was sent to none of them but only to Zar'ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

[27] And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Eli'sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'aman the Syrian."

[28] When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.

[29] And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong.

[30] But passing through the midst of them he went away

Reflection.

1. Last Sunday we read the first part of this story. Jesus reads Isa 61:1-2, his prophetic mandate, and tells his neighbors that he is fulfilling this prophesy. He is well received at first. All spoke well of him. But then they recall that he is a carpenter, Joseph's son. When he announced explicitly that he is a prophet and would not do much healing here at Nazareth and, further, that he will bring his prophetic message to the gentiles, his neighbors turn on him and try to kill him. Poor Jesus. This - the first story of his public life – shows us the pattern of his whole life. He will be accepted but finally rejected – and killed.
2. This has already been announced to Mary and Joseph at the presentation in the Temple by Simeon (Lk 1:34-35). Here are Simeon's words: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against [35] (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed."

3. What seems to have turned the tide with his neighbors was the two prophets to whom he compared himself. He will be like Elijah who went to the gentile widow in Sidon, outside Israel. He will heal people like the gentile Naaman the leper. (In Lk 17, it is the Samaritan leper who returns to give thanks to Jesus, not the other nine Jewish lepers). Those in Nazareth know they are the chosen people and – like Jonah – don't think much of the gentiles. They cannot entertain the idea of the mission to the gentiles
4. Jesus is on a mission given by his Father. Nobody can interfere with this mission. Indeed, God is visiting his people through Jesus and this mission, this visitation must continue. So his neighbors are powerless to hurt him. He continues on his way – a way that will lead to Jerusalem and glory.

Next week: Lk 5:1-11

Luke.5

[1] While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennes'aret.[2] And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

[3] Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

[4] And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

[5] And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."

[6] And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking,

[7] they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

[8] But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

[9] For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken;

[10] and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men."

[11] And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.