

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE HOMILY**  
**Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)**  
**July 4, 2021**  
**“Truth and Its Source”**

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The Gospel passage tells us that Jesus returned to His own native place and taught in the synagogue where apparently the people recognized Him. The people were amazed at His message but struggled with Him as the messenger. They could not believe that all this knowledge was coming from Him, a carpenter’s son. “They found him too much for them and they took offense at Him”. Jesus in response compares himself to the prophets and says: “No prophet is without honor except in his native place”, among his own neighbors and relatives (Mk 6:1-6). It is one thing to be rejected by strangers, but it is quite another to be rejected by your own people. It must have made Him very sad.

In essence, Jesus was rejected for the most part by His own people. Why?

- Perhaps it was because as the carpenter’s son He had no social standing. In other words, He was not important enough. His pedigree was not significant.
- “Where did He get all this”, they said. What was the source of His knowledge? He was not a famous Rabbi, with advanced degrees or proper academic credentials.
- The prophet Jeremiah felt that he was not qualified to be a prophet and complained to God that he was “too young”. (Jer 1:6) (CCC 2584) Perhaps he felt that because of his youth people would not listen to him.

Businesses will sometimes hire famous people to hawk their products under the notion that this or that person is respectable and well known, such as athletes, movie stars, and politicians and this notoriety will motivate people to purchase their product or listen to them.

In the eyes of the people, Jesus just simply did not have the credentials to be saying what He was saying. As a result, their “lack of faith” distressed Him (Mk 6:6).

Is the problem really Jesus or does the fault lie with the people? All the prophets experienced some form of rejection by the people they were sent to. In the first reading, God said to Ezekiel the prophet; “I am sending you to a people who are rebellious, hard of face, and obstinate of heart.” Ezekiel was sent to the Israelites, God’s own people (Ez 2:2-5).

God is describing a people who have rebelled against His law and refuse to repent of their ways and refuse to be convinced otherwise.

The rejection of the prophet himself and therefore, Jesus, who is comparing Himself with the prophets, can sometimes be a veiled and subtle rejection of His message, a message of repentance and a return to God’s high moral standards. And a rejection of the message and therefore the messenger, is a veiled rejection of the one who sent the messenger. Those who reject the message of truth, reject the messenger

of truth, and He who has sent the messenger in the first place, the God of truth. Thus, it ultimately becomes a rejection of God.

Jesus said to His disciples:

“He who accepts anyone I send accepts me,  
“And in accepting me, accepts the one who sent me (Jn 13:20).

And:

“He who welcomes you welcomes me and welcomes Him who sent me.  
“He who welcomes a prophet...will receive a prophet’s reward.  
“He who receives a holy man... will receive a holy man’s reward (Mt 10:4-41).

God’s messenger would sometimes lament the suffering that he received at the hands of the people he was sent to:

“For your sake (Lord) I bear insult and shame covers my face.  
“I have become an outcast to my brother, a stranger to my own mother’s sons,  
“because zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who blaspheme you, fall on me. (Ps 69:7-10).

The prophets and Jesus were sent to the Israelites, their own people, in an effort to convince them to repent, have a change of heart, and return to God. Today the church is the New Israel, the new people of God, and the situation appears to have not changed much since the days of the ancient prophets. The members of God’s people continue to show signs of rebelliousness, obstinacy and hardness of heart. If this is the case with God’s own people, what is the state of affairs with the rest of the world?

Many refuse to accept the entire moral teachings of God yet pretend to remain faithful to Him. When we hear truth, we should accept it regardless of our opinion of the messenger’s qualifications, for all truth has its origins in God. Sacred scripture tells us, “If today you hear his voice harden not your hearts” (Ps 94:7-8).

Many there are who reject outright the scripturally based moral teachings of the Catholic Church simply because it is the Catholic Church who is teaching them, despite the fact that the Catholic Church is the only Christian church that can trace its origins back 2,000 years to Jesus Christ himself. For it alone bears in its constitution all four marks of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church (CCC 811-865). Jesus in speaking to his apostles and hence to the Catholic Church said;

“He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Lk 10:16) (1 Sm 8:7) (CCC 87; 858).

**Note: CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church**