



Made for God

February 1, 2017

Wednesday of the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Author: Father Walter Schu, LC

Mark 6:1-6

He departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house." So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. He went around to the villages in the vicinity teaching.

Introductory Prayer: O Lord, you said that blest are they who find no stumbling block in you. I want to be a blest person, so that you may find in me no obstacle to the holiness you want for me. I believe in you, but I long for a greater faith to see and respond to the signs of your hand moving in my world. I love you, Lord, and wish to lead my brothers and sisters to you through my testimony, through my being truly convinced that you are the life of men.

Petition: Lord, grant me the gift of total surrender to your will for me in all things.

1. “Where did this man get all this? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands”: How beautiful it is to contemplate the humble and meek Christ! He now manifests, to the shock and awe of the worldly-minded, the signs of his true origin and the nature of his true mission. The power of God, the power of the supernatural, now intervenes in what is merely natural, through the mere “carpenter’s son.” The “signs of credibility” that Christ enacts through his mighty words and deeds powerfully point to his divine origins and invite his contemporaries to faith. It is an invitation to leave behind them the superficial category of Jesus as just a nice neighbor (which means they can live the same as before) and receive the gift of Christ as Redeemer (which means change and conversion). Are there signs in my life that the Lord is looking to change me, to change my behavior in some way so I might live more by faith and charity? How much longer will I resist before I will ~~am~~ be won over by his goodness?

2. “And they took offense at him”: It is a sacrifice to give God his place in the ordinary flow of our day. To do so, we need to sacrifice our sense of self-sufficiency, by which we are inclined to be the prime mover of everything in our world. We need to sacrifice our vanity, which desists from efforts to adore God they bring little or no applause from those around us. We need to sacrifice the comfort of our naturalism, our horizontal view of things. Ultimately this sacrifice is a work of love responding to a divine invitation to share in God’s life—love, because he is asking and wants to see ~~me~~ us giving. Let us move our hearts to embrace this sacrifice joyfully, for the sake of love.

It helps to see that in this passage there are no neutral states. Those who reject the invitation to love are turned to love’s opposite—hate—, specifically the hatred of the supernatural. It is a tragedy at work in our culture in many places, giving rise to the forces of anti-evangelization. Let us pray and be vigilant that it may never become our tragedy.

3. “He was not able to perform any mighty deed there”: Our Lord makes himself vulnerable to us, to our willingness to believe. He comes only to make us happy and to elevate our lives to be more beautiful, deeper in meaning and richer in fruits. He wants to bring into our life his power to work miracles; and to move mountains of fear and burdens that we encounter. He comes to be ointment for our wounds and consolation for our weary hearts. The only thing he needs to make us happy, then, is our faith, our unconditional and active faith. Without it— (since he respects our freedom—), we cripple his capacity to act in our life as Savior and Lord. How sad it is to see how easily we refuse such a selfless and beautiful gift.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, teach me to receive you with a heart ready to leave my rationalistic way of acting and choosing. Help me to know how to read your invitations with supernatural faith and to follow them in true obedience, where true love proves itself.

Resolution: I will be very obedient to the lights I receive today from the Holy Spirit, acting on them with promptness and generosity.