

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time † Sunday, 4 July 2021



In England & Wales:

Cycle of Prayer: Those who suffer persecution and denial of human rights

Keynote: The prophetic role – the one chosen by God

Prophet Ezekiel 2: 2-5

'The spirit came to me and made me stand up,' says Ezekiel *'and I heard the Lord speaking to me.'* This man describes his vocation – his call – the call to become God's voice among the rebels those unfaithful Israelites who have turned away from the true God and the Covenant.

The human man of weakness, is filled with the spirit, and stands up to proclaim what God commands. *'Whether they listen or not,'* we are told, *'the people will know there is a prophet among them.'* Now is the time for us to speak out too as witnesses, or maybe time for us to listen as others speak of God's word to us. This reading prepares us for the gospel today and the manifestation of Jesus as prophet – God's own voice speaking today among us.

Responsorial Psalm 122 (123): 1-3 – A pilgrimage song expressing a cry for help

Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 12: 7-10

The very weaknesses of the apostle Paul – the insults, the hardships and persecutions – he endures for the sake of the gospel are set in contrast with the power and grace of God. As in the first reading, now Paul – the man of weakness – is filled with the Spirit.

Paul tells his fellow Christians that God's promise, *'My grace is enough for you, my power is at its best in weakness,'* this promise allows Paul to say, *'I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me... for it is when I am weak that I am strong.'* If we think of ourselves as weak or unsure, then we can take strength from the apostle's certainty that the Lord will guide and protect him in his mission as a witness to the gospel. Paul professes, *'for it is when I am weak that I am strong.'*

Gospel according to Mark 6: 1-6

The local boy Jesus, from Nazareth – *'the carpenter, the son of Mary...'* doesn't find recognition among his neighbours when he speaks in the synagogue. *'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?"'*

But in disregarding the teaching of Jesus, they will also miss out on that very wisdom that they recognised. *'Jesus says 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 although he cured a few sick people by laying his hands upon them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.'*

Where do we stand? Is Jesus amazed at our lack of faith? Are we ready to accept Jesus the healer, and prophet – the one whom God has sent to his rebellious people?