

## Homily - Year 4 - C - Feb 3, 2019

People are funny, hard to please, unpredictable, and, of course, we always like to be right. It's just the way we are. Even in today's gospel, we have an example of how moods can change very quickly. You will remember that last week's passage ended where this week's passage starts. Jesus was reading from the prophet Isaiah and, at the end of the passage, added: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Prior to this statement, the people were awestruck by Jesus, but then, all of a sudden, people start commenting on his origins and that he is just one of them. So frenzied was their attitude towards Jesus that they wanted to throw him from a cliff.

With a response like that, you would think that Jesus would be discouraged and perhaps even give up, but, as we know, he did not. A source of strength can be found in the first reading, God speaking to Jeremiah telling him not to give up when he preaches God's word: "They will fight against you but not prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord."

Last week, I mentioned that perhaps our faith and or practice of the faith have waned over the years. Certainly, when our belief systems are made fun of or ridiculed in public, discouragement may set in and we hesitate to speak out. When we speak on behalf of the unborn, the defenseless, the poor, the needy, our voices may be drowned out by those who want choice, want power, and want their own way. Giving in to current popular thought when it runs contrary to our beliefs, staying silent when we are afraid of being rejected, and not speaking when speaking is the only right thing to do should never happen in our lives.

Dr. Seuss' first children's book was entitled *A Story that No One Can Beat*. It was rejected by 27 publishers. It was eventually renamed *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, became successful and launched his career. He was discouraged but never gave up. His reflection that expresses his convictions is: "Those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind." Chew on that for a while.

Even Paul tells us that in life we have to put aside our childish ways. The childish will try to avoid responsibility and will give into discouragement. The persevering adult is the one who remains honest when others are cheating, who remains chaste when others exercise

promiscuity, who speak on behalf of life while others want their own choice, who speak against discrimination while others disparage the minorities.

In the realm of beliefs, the adult recognizes the intrinsic spiritual value of a sacrament while others see a mere ceremony. The adult sees the body of Christ in the Eucharist while others see a poor representation of bread. The adult knows that baptism takes away original sin and makes us children of God and members of the Church, while others see Baptism as a nice ritual to get family and friends together and show off the baby. The adult sees marriage as a commitment between a man and a woman imitating the commitment of Christ to his Church while the child wants marriage to be an agreement between two people merely for their own purposes.

You see being a disciple of Jesus is easy when we define what that means. Being a disciple of Jesus is a rewarding challenge when we see ourselves as prophets for our Lord. As I said last week, so I say again this week, the words of Jesus must be our own: "Today, this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."