

4th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 1:4-5,17-19
Ps 71:1-6,15,17
1 Cor. 12:31 -- 13:13
Luke 4:21-30

Monday January 31
St. John Bosco
2 Sm 15:13-14,30; 16:5-13
Ps 3:2-7
Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday February 1
2 Samuel 18:9-10,14b,
24-25a,30;19:3
Ps 86:1-6
Mark 5:21-43

Wednesday February 2
Presentation of the Lord
Malachi 3:1-4
Ps 24:7,8,9,10
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40

Thursday February 3
1 Kings 2:1-4,10-12
1 Chr 29:10-12
Mark 6:7-13

Friday February 4
Sirach 47:2-11
Ps 18:31,47,50,51
Mark 6:14-29

Saturday February 5
St. Agatha
1 Kings 3:4-13
Ps 119:9-14
Mark 6:30-34

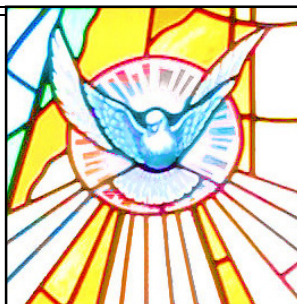
Take a close look at this Sunday's Gospel story. Jesus has just finished reading the scripture that we heard last Sunday ("The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor," etc.). He tells the people in the synagogue that this scripture is now being fulfilled through him, and they all speak highly of him. But by the end of this scripture, they're furious.

What changed their attitude?

Their awe turned into confusion when they remembered, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" Unlike those who would meet Jesus for the first time in later chapters of the story, these people had experiences with Jesus the toddler who fell when learning to walk, Jesus the teenager who bled from mistakes made while learning the carpentry trade from his father, Jesus the young man who wept at his father's funeral.

Their attitude changed when they stopped listening with their spirits and started listening with their pre-conceived notions. This disconnect from the divine then stirred up their emotions.

Think of how people react when you confuse them by doing or saying something out of character, that is, out of the character that they expect from you. If you're perceived as too young or too old to do what you are in fact



capable of doing, or if your education level doesn't include a formal degree that proves that you know what you do already know, or if you don't tell people what they want to hear, their surprise turns into confusion that triggers an emotional response against you.

We expect them to believe us, and when they don't, our surprise turns into confusion and self-protective anger. But how did Jesus handle it when they treated him this way? He calmly spoke a truth that was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Did he have an emotional reaction? Sure! He was human like us; we were all created by the Father to have emotions. The problem is not in the emotions; the problem occurs when we listen through our emotions instead of our spiritual connection to the Holy Spirit.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. How much time do you spend training your ear to hear the Holy Spirit within you?
2. When life is busy happening around you, do you mostly react to it or are you on some level praying about it?
3. What can you do this week to develop a more automatic connection to the Spirit of God?
4. What are some of the ways you listen to the Holy Spirit?
5. Keeping in mind a surprising challenge that happened to you recently, describe the differences between an emotional reaction and a spiritual action.