

Homily

Mark 6: 1-6

- We all know that people come in different shapes, sizes and colors.
- And because we are human, we tend to look at the outward appearance of people and make judgments about them. Too tall, too short, pretty, handsome, she looks mean, he seems nice – we can't help doing this, we are human.
- We usually make these judgments because of past experiences in our life. For example, if a red haired girl beat you up and stole your lunch money when you were a child, you may develop distrust for people with red hair.
- Of course when we take these judgments to an extreme and start to categorize people we are on the very dangerous ground of becoming prejudice.
- Still there is always the tendency to form an opinion or make an assumption about someone based on their outward appearance.
- What we don't see by just looking at the outside is what is on the inside. By just looking at a person we cannot tell what's inside – we cannot see the “real” person by just a glance. We don't know their personality, their likes and dislikes, their talents – we can't tell what is in their heart and soul. Until...
- Until that person is comfortable enough with us that they want and choose to reveal what is on the inside. And this is risky. There is a chance of criticism or rejection. But revealing what is on the inside can also be healing – for others and us.
- We see this kind of judging a person based on appearance happening to Jesus in today's Gospel reading.
- Jesus grew up in Nazareth but went out to other towns and villages teaching and healing. But in today's Gospel He returns home. He is in the synagogue of His hometown. And Jesus wants to and does reveal His inner self to the people who probably thought they knew Him best because they watched Him grow up.
- In that synagogue Jesus revealed who He truly was: the Messiah, the Son of God!! You would expect them to give Jesus a hero's welcome. Expect them to be overjoyed with “hometown” pride.
- Instead, they were stuck on judging Him by outward appearances. “Isn't this Mary's son? The Carpenter?” “How can He be the Son of God – who does this guy think he is?” Many of those present got

angry and wanted to physically throw Jesus out of the synagogue. Why?

- Jesus didn't look the way they expected a messiah to look – not kingly enough. Jesus message wasn't the message they expected to hear from a messiah. He just didn't fit their idea of a messiah. They didn't take the time to listen carefully to the inside Jesus was sharing. They just dismissed him. Sometimes those closest to us can be our toughest critics.
- And our Gospel passage tells us Jesus wasn't really accepted in His hometown and didn't perform many signs or miracles there. We know Jesus could have easily performed signs and healings if He chose to - in order to convince those in His hometown.
- But when we look closely at Jesus' life, we see that the signs and miracles and healings never took place because Jesus wanted to “show off” or prove Himself.
- The signs, the miracles and the healings were all rooted in love. Jesus' inner self is all about love. Love for us. But to receive these things we must give Jesus' permission to act in our lives. We do that by accepting who He really is – Our Lord and Savior – and by putting our faith in His power and love. It is then that wonderful things happen.
- So today's Gospel challenges us in several ways. It challenges us to have the courage to reveal to others who we really are on the inside. It challenges us to accept and get to know others and not fall into the trap of criticizing and judging based on outward appearance. (Fr. Patrick always reminds us not to look down on anyone – unless you are admiring his or her shoes!!).
- Most importantly, we are challenged to take the time to really know Jesus and grow in faith in His great love for each of us.
- The key to facing these challenges is to fill our inner self with love. How? Just ask. Faith is a gift from God. Free of charge. If we ask, God will increase our faith. And the gift of faith comes with love, insight, courage and strength.
- When we are open to God's gift of faith, we become comfortable with whom we really are. We get the courage to reveal to others who we really are: Children of God. Good, kind and caring with special gifts and talents to share.
- And we create situations where others feel safe, respected and cared for; so they can reveal who they really are: the same as we are, children of God.

- When we grow in faith we gain the ability and desire to see God's presence in every person around us. Outward appearances no longer matter.