

## The Sermon at Nazara

Reading out a passage of Scripture and then applying it to yourself and proclaiming that it is being fulfilled even as you listen, is a pretty bold thing to do. I doubt if anyone in the synagogue at Nazara on that portentous Sabbath day would have been expecting it. And when they did hear it their reaction predictably was one of astonishment. Here is the local lad, the jobbing builder applying the sacred words of the prophet Isaiah to himself. What?! No wonder they were astonished. It is difficult for us to imagine it happening now, but isn't it precisely what we are meant to be about? If we read those words of Isaiah and see them as the outward evocation of our baptismal anointing, then de facto we possess the Spirit of boldness that enables us to live out our sharing in the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission of Jesus Christ.

Sharing in the priesthood of Christ means that we look to consecrate our lives in holiness. The essence of holiness is founded on our relationship with Christ and in the way which that relationship defines us. Seeking to establish the pattern of Christ's life as the template of our own ensures that our pathway to holiness is well founded. Of course we know that we will often struggle and sometimes fail to express our holiness. Such struggles and failures are not without precedent in the Gospel. Jesus too was tried and tested and experienced failure, but his trust in the God who loved him was steadfast. Our resolve to value our holiness and through it to trust in God by following Jesus, is the sign of our priesthood being lived in the rough and tumble of our daily life.

Sharing in the prophetic life of Christ means being prepared to stand up for our beliefs. This may take us into dangerous areas; to places where we would prefer not to go. But the prophet is not speaking words of his/her own but the Word of God. Even if this simply entails affirming our faith as Christian in what is becoming a more and more secular environment, it is still a challenge. It takes courage to place yourself in a situation where you may be looked on as "religious". The whole tenor of our society has changed so much that just expressing a religious view raises eyebrows and sotto voce comments. But remember the prophetic voice of Jesus is heard in his home town and realising this is important for us. We don't need to go to unknown places to proclaim our faith since the environment around us is just as challenging. It is the Spirit which resides within us that gives us the courage we need.

Sharing the royal life of Christ means being ready to accept a life of service. In our communities, in our families, in our marriages we are called upon to be servants to each other. We are invited to walk with one another and to journey alongside each other with our arms open, ready to accept what happens to us as a way of witnessing Christ to the world. This requires us to wash each other's feet, to copy what Jesus has shown us, as the deepest demonstration of his love for us and of our love for each other. For Jesus, this service or this kingship reaches its zenith when he is lifted up on the cross and he draws all people to himself. As we are drawn to him, we bring our service and our burden.

In the sermon at Nazara Jesus affirms his commitment to his mission. Let us pray for the grace to follow his call and to make it central to our lives.