

# Gospel Eco



FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME JANUARY 30, 2022



It is noteworthy that some Catholics question the speech of Pope Francis, questioning his theological knowledge. They are prejudiced for the South American origin of the Pope and his formation took place in the context of the "theology of the people." The matter of the Pope gives rise to comment on the damage we do or the treasure we lose when we let ourselves be carried away by our prejudices towards other people. In many cases, the status quo or economic position define the confidence, treat or acceptance of what the other brings us.

We are wondering:

**Is my ranking of acceptance of the contribution of others, free from prejudices of race, origin, religion, economic level or education?**

This Sunday the gospel tells us about prejudice and rejection, also about love and inclusion.

## Gospel

Lk, 4:21-30

Jesús said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.



## REFLECTION

The discourse begun by Jesus in the Gospel that we read last Sunday continues this Sunday. His words, expressed in his synagogue town, Nazareth, cause controversy among the listeners: on the one hand, they arouse admiration and on the other, rejection. His countrymen question Him about His origins. "Isn't he the son of Joseph? Skepticism is based primarily on familiarity. Jesus was one of them. He did not come invested with a rabbinical title. Nor did he come from a major city, but from Nazareth, a small and insignificant town located in the Galilee region, in northern Israel. The Old Testament makes little mention of it. In times of Joseph and Mary, it had few people, most of them dedicated themselves to agriculture and some others to crafts.

Jesus experienced a collective rejection in His own town, although due to the familiarity of His neighbors, - the neighboring towns, who had no prejudices, believe in Jesus (Cf. Mt 9: 27-34) -. However, the rejection is centered on the message of the grace that Jesus makes for all men, including the pagans. Some exegetes explain this scandal because Jesus deliberately omits some words from the original text of Isaiah (cf. Is 61: 1-2) and in His reading He does not mention the words referring to the wrath of God against the pagans. And, in addition, He completes His explanation by putting two pagans as a model: the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian. With Jesus comes the age of grace: one can no longer think of the wrath of God. He loves us, Jesus shows it to us without putting conditions. He does not exclude or reject. If he has to make an option, He will do it for the poor, the oppressed and in a specific way, for the pagans. Therefore, those who listen Jesus, will be men and women free from prejudice, with a strong sense of inclusion and constructive dialogue.

Today the Gospel asks us to decide: between being prophets of grace and love or the mob of anger and exclusion. In this sense, the environmental crisis we are experiencing is a valuable opportunity for us Christians, confronted with the future we are building, to let go of prejudices and dialogue with other people and groups, believers or unbelievers. Because the solution to the socio-environmental problem interests us and affects all the inhabitants of this planet (cf. Laudato Si' 14). But to take this urgent and necessary step, it is necessary to get out of the "denier" circle and give credit to this environmental emergency. Insensitivity to the global ecological crisis, in our opinion, also has a lot to do with the routine and familiarity of what happens around us without directly affecting us. That is why the encyclical Laudato Si' exhorts us to see and analyze what is happening in our Common Home (Chapters 1 and 2).

Being aware of the neglect we have had of the gift that God entrusted to us, such as Creation, has to remove us from within to unite with other voices. Believers or Christians, have committed themselves to safeguard our world. We need to break our isolated, self-referential and exclusive consciousness. When we are able to overcome individualism, an alternative lifestyle can really develop and a major change in society becomes possible. (cf. LS 208).

**As a follower of Christ, do I feel invited to abandon my prejudices in the search for solutions to the environmental problem? Do I consider that "denialism" of the environmental problem is an attitude that I must overcome?**

### PRAYER

**Lord, increase our faith and the ability to contemplate you in Creation, Your work. Thank you for everything You give us through the World: food, water, air, etc. Make us faithful in caring for the Creation and respecting it. As your disciple I have to be a word of grace, of good news and of integration in a world fragmented by injustice and inequality. As your follower, I want to find in the common good an opportunity to dialogue, integrate and unite efforts to transform the World in an ecological commitment. Amen.**