

Fourteenth Sunday of the Year, Cycle B
July 8, 2012

Ezekiel 2:2-5
2 Corinthians 12: 7-10
Mark 6: 1-6

“This wooden O”: I learned that phrase while watching the movie of Shakespeare’s play Henry V. in 1944. The film begins with a reproduction of the Globe theatre as the play is beginning there: The theatre has a cylindrical shape made of wood, with three stories of seats looking down at the play.

To introduce the play a character called “Chorus” calls for imagination as the actors portray the story of Henry’s conquest of France. He asks,

“; ~~Can this cockpit hold~~
_____ The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
_____ within this wooden O the very casques
_____ That did affright the air at Agincourt?

What “Can this cockpit hold”? Our chapel here is not circular, but think of the wood, from the pews to the choir stalls reaching up to the windows, to the altar, and the crucifix hanging above it, to the wooden fixtures framing the tabernacle. A “wooden O”?

Here is a “wooden O” ready not for a play but indeed for “Drama,” if we take seriously ~~the~~ word’s literal sense of *action*, the action of our worshipping together as we celebrate the parts of the mass. The players are all of us, the people of God come together to share the Word and the mystery of the Eucharist.

Let us consider today’s readings. Both the first reading and the Gospel present scenes of conflict and misunderstanding. In the first reading we find the prophet Ezekiel an exile in Babylonian territory, contemporary Iraq. The Babylonians had mastered all of Israel. The Lord speaks to Ezekiel, decrying the behavior of his fellow Israelites as “rebels, hard of face and obstinate of heart.” Whatever their response, “they shall know that a prophet has been among them.”

—
In the Gospel Jesus is preaching in the synagogue of Nazareth, his native place. The listeners recognize him as one raised there. But they are astonished, saying, “Where did this man get all this?” They seem to remember that he had brothers and sisters. Amazed, Jesus responds, “A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house.” Then we are told that “he was not able to perform any mighty deed except curing a few sick people and laying his hands on them.” He might have judged that in these circumstances, miracles would not be persuasive.

The passage raises several issues; Let me avoid them by quoting an expert: “One’s interpretation really depends on theological beliefs that are beyond the evidence in this passage.”(1)

The second reading presents St. Paul balancing his extraordinary and delightful revelations with what he calls “a thorn of the flesh.” Exactly what that was is not clear.

Allow me to quote an interpretation: “Humbled as he is by his affliction, Paul feels most powerful, for he knows that it is the power of God working through him.”(2)

We might reflect; ”Is not the power of God working through us as we celebrate the Eucharist?”

Let us now continue our celebration of the Mass, trusting in God’s presence throughout.

(1) Diane Bergant, *Preaching the New Lectionary, Year B*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 296

(2) *Ibid.*, 295