

April 7, 2017

Jeremiah 20:10-13

John 10:31-42

In today's Gospel from John, Jesus is antagonized by the Jews who are gathered around him. This is happening during the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem, a celebration of the deliverance of Israel from Syrian oppression. Why are the Jews picking up rocks to stone Jesus? A big part of the reason is that Jesus is not who they expected their messiah to be. Jesus did not fit the profile of one who would deliver this people from their situation.

The Jews were expecting the coming of a Messiah who would overthrow the Roman occupiers and reclaim Israel's throne. They expected a messiah who would become king and restore the Davidic Dynasty and bring in a time of peace and justice. They were expecting a messiah who would deliver them from their existing oppression.

Jesus was not fulfilling the long-awaited expectations of the Jewish people. So with hearts as hard as the stones they were throwing, they wished Jesus dead. They remained blind to the fact that Jesus had been performing the works of the Father through his teachings and miracles.

At the end of today's passage, Jesus returns across the Jordan river to the place where John baptized him, back to the place where his mission started, where the Holy Spirit descended upon him and the Father's voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mk 1:11). This must have been a great time of prayer for Jesus, a time to be refreshed and strengthened before continuing his mission which would lead him to the cross.

**Reflection questions:**

1) What are the preconceived thoughts might we have and how do we deal with circumstances that don't always go our way? When are the times we reach for rocks to stone a person? When someone doesn't meet our expectations or desires, whether it is a family member, co-worker, friend or neighbor, do we injure them with our speech and actions? Do our own frustrations cause us to lash out at others? The tongue can be a very powerful stone. Lent is a time to drop the rocks we throw at people and fast from gossip and do works of mercy and reconcile with the people around us.

2) As we come to a close this Lenten season and approach Holy Week, reflect upon your own baptism. It was the time when you were made one with the Trinity and sent on mission to do the works of the Father. Has this Lent been a time to grow in oneness with Jesus as you entered more deeply into prayer? As we approach Holy Week, may we be refreshed and strengthened by our Lenten experiences as we continue to live out the mission of our baptism.

*Reflection by Gary Blue, St. Joseph Parish, Dyer.*