

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (7/4-5/2009)

Ezekiel 2/2-5, Psalm 123, 2 Corinthians 12/7-10, Mark 6/1-6

If you need additional proof that Jesus was truly human and embroiled in very human situations, consider today's Gospel passage.

He stirs up so much emotion when he appears in his home town of Nazareth that he finds it impossible to do any good among the very people he knew best.

"They found him too much for them."

It's not so much what Jesus did or said, it was the simple fact that the people knew him and his family and his background.

Familiarity truly had bred contempt.

Moreover, his reputation as a wonder-worker had preceded him, and his "townies" seemed outraged that he had done nothing for them.

It reminds me of a woman I met many years ago, whose sister had won big in the lottery; she was so distraught, even physically sick, because her sister would not give her a share of the winnings.

There arose a rift in that family that took a long time to get resolved.

Families are a source of so much blessing in our lives, and so much pain and sorrow.

We all know instances of families being split apart, and nobody can tell you why or how it happened.

Some real or fancied hurt takes over and that's it!

From that time on, everyone feels the poisoned familial atmosphere.

So Jesus had a taste of such treatment in his own life and ministry.

Welcome to the human race, Jesus – as if he didn't know!

In the second reading from *2 Corinthians*, St. Paul reveals an interesting fact about himself.

He says just enough to whet our appetites for more information, but he leaves us with unanswered questions as well.

Apparently, he was stricken with some ailment, whether physical, psychological or spiritual we cannot say; he calls it *"a thorn in the flesh... an angel of Satan."*

When he repeatedly begs the Lord to free him from this "malady", he is given a terse but pointed answer: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."*

God's grace is sufficient for us; Jesus found that out as he faced into disappointing and even hostile reactions from the people he loved.

Paul learned it from his own suffering.

How shall you and I learn to accept it?

What event will precipitate us into total trust of God's action and grace in our lives?

Perhaps it has already occurred for you, and you've made your peace with the Lord.

Perhaps the crisis still awaits you in the future.

Either way, there is one thing we can be sure of.

God's grace and presence is enough for us; in our weakness, His power will be made perfect!

Have a restful and sane July 4th weekend!