

## 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

### GOSPEL

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Jesus began to speak in the synagogue: ‘This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.’ And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, ‘This is Joseph’s son, surely?’

But he replied, ‘No doubt you will quote me the saying, “Physician, heal yourself” and tell me, “We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own countryside.”’

And he went on, ‘I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.

‘There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah’s day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha’s time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.’

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

(Luke 4:21–30)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- Capernaum is a town on the shores of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus performed miracles. It was the hometown of Peter.
- Elijah was one of the greatest prophets of Israel. He lived around 850 years before Jesus and was famed for resisting the idolatry of the time and for his preaching and wonder working. Elisha was his successor.
- Both Syria and Sidon were close neighbours of Israel, but they worshipped pagan gods and were not part of the chosen people. Despite this, both Elijah and Elisha worked wonders in God’s name among them. They reached out to the Gentiles when they found people of faith there.

### EXPLORING THE WORD

This text is the continuation of last week’s gospel, where Jesus announces his mission in his hometown. His program is to bring hope to the hopeless, and inclusion to the outcast. Here we learn of how his mission is received: initial approval very quickly turns to rejection! What Jesus is pointing out is that God acts unexpectedly and that God’s love and care are available to all people, not just to the people of Israel, even though their needs may be great. One of their own has dared to challenge their preconceptions, and they vent their disapproval with violence—a violence that will culminate on the cross. Jesus leaves Nazareth and never returns. The remaining action in the Gospel of Luke occurs in Capernaum and on the road to Jerusalem, where the final rejection will come to completion.

- Have you ever been genuinely shocked by something said by someone you thought you knew well?
- Talk about why the people of Nazareth may have been shocked by Jesus’ words.
- Have others been shocked by your decision to pursue a life of faith?
- You could tell something of the story of the two prophets mentioned in this text.

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- ‘Physician, heal yourself.’ Are there things within you that need healing?
- ‘He won the approval of all.’ When have you won approval from others? How did you respond?
- Have you ever had the experience of being ridiculed or rejected because of your faith? How do you respond to this?
- This week, reach out to someone who has experienced rejection. Offer solace to someone in need of healing.
- Have you ever had your opinions or comments treated with derision or disdain? Perhaps you were saying something you knew others may not want to hear. How did you feel? Were you able to hold your ground or was your opinion simply ‘hustled’ out?
- Who are the prophets of our own time who speak words we may not like to hear? How are they sometimes treated?
- Use an adaptation of the collect this week:

*Grant us, Lord our God,  
that we may honour you with all our mind,  
and love everyone with truth of heart.*

