

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST SIMON STOCK  
CARMELITE CHURCH 41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET LONDON W8 4BB**

Web: [www.carmelitechurch.org](http://www.carmelitechurch.org)  
Tel: 0207 937 9866

Email: [enquiries@carmelitechurch.org](mailto:enquiries@carmelitechurch.org)  
Mobile: 0770 8203 595

**Priests in the Parish:** Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,  
Fr John McGowan ocd, Fr Tijo Xavier ocd, Fr Theophilus Nyamali ocd

**Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B) – 4th July 2021**

Prejudice. How much it can prevent us from true experience! The Gospel today gives us a glance at the experience of Jesus among his own people in his home town. The story today follows upon the two stories we heard last week about the faith of Jairus that led Jesus to raise his daughter from death and the woman with a haemorrhage who got healed because of her faith. These two people were non-Jews and the healings took place in a gentile territory. After this Jesus returned to his home town, Nazareth and was teaching in the synagogues. As usual, his teaching was followed by acts of healing. The people were astonished by his teaching but something had prevented them from totally accepting it: prejudice.

You see, Jesus and his immediate family – Joseph and Mary – as well as his extended family (cousins – Jude, Joset, Jude and Simon) were very well known in Nazareth. Joseph was a carpenter or a builder, as we would call him today. And he must have constructed several of the houses in the town. Naturally, Jesus would have accompanied his father to give him a hand at these jobs, and so would have mastered the trade to be able to work independently. So Jesus was known as ‘the carpenter’ as we hear from our Gospel today. But having listened to Jesus speak so well with power in his teaching and having been so astounded by his words and the miracles he worked, his townsmen could still not get over the prejudice that he was a mere carpenter. They know his family and relatives and they are not so learned as to teach him such wisdom. So they wondered: “where did the man get all this?” and they would not accept him.

We can see how prejudice blinded Jesus’s kinsfolk from recognising who he truly is. In contrast, demons and gentiles (outsiders) had no difficulty in recognising him. His kinsfolk could only see the carpenter, the son of Mary, but they could not see the Son of God who had been sent to them. Consequently, only a few miracles could take place in Jesus’s own town.

We ourselves might wonder how Jesus’s townsmen failed to recognise who he truly was. But we should not be surprised at this. We heard in our first reading how the prophet Ezekiel faced a similar rejection by his own people and they would not listen to him. God who spoke through Ezekiel and through Jesus continues to speak through our neighbours and events in our life today. But like Jesus’s townsmen, we too may lack the openness to recognize God’s presence in them. We tend to listen to those who are unfamiliar, those with high qualifications and big titles after their name. We regard such people as knowledgeable and therefore possess the truth. We often do not think that our life can be shaped by those with whom we sit in the church every day. Are we really open to listen to what God might be saying through the people around us? Are we not missing the miracles that could take place in our life simply because our prejudices block us from encountering those around us who God is constantly using to speak to us?

The Gospel of Mark continues to invite us to think about who Jesus is. We know and believe that He is the Son of God. Believing this, the Gospel wants us to think about the meaning of discipleship as we struggle to follow Jesus. Discipleship always entails first an openness to listen

to Jesus, to be taught by him and to receive the innumerable daily miracles that he provides for each of us. Let us not allow our knowledge to hinder our faith in him, for he is always seeking to heal us of whatever illnesses that besiege us. He tells us to 'only have faith'. But discipleship also entails facing rejections in our own lives when we try to follow Jesus. Like St Paul, we too must be content with being rejected so that the power of Christ may stay over us and sustain our journey into Christ.

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## NOTICES

### **Second Collection Today for Peter's Pence**

Today we have a second collection for Peter's Pence. We are all familiar with this collection which is taken once a year to help the work of our Holy Father the Pope. Envelopes marked 'Peter's Pence' are at the back of the church if you don't already have one. Please use these for your donation for the Pope. Thank you.

### **Church Opening**

Our church is now open from 7.30am to 7.00pm. All COVID protocols will continue to be observed including signing in using Test & Trace number or NHS App. Please continue to sanitize your hands, wear your face mask and maintain a safe distance while in the church.

### **Preparations for First Holy Communion**

We are accepting registrations for preparations for Holy Communion. The last group met by Zoom only. But this group which will begin classes in September will meet face to face here in our church hall. All necessary protocols for safety at that time will of course be followed. If you have children for First Holy Communion, please do register them ahead of September. Children must be 7yrs old by 31<sup>st</sup> August. The registration form is on our website [www.carmelitechurch.org/activities/catechism-classes](http://www.carmelitechurch.org/activities/catechism-classes) or simply email [catechism.co-ordinator@carmelitechurch.org](mailto:catechism.co-ordinator@carmelitechurch.org) and request a form to be sent to you.

### **Collections Last Sunday**

Offering	£1436
Gift Aid Envelopes	£244

Thank you for your generosity

*Fr. Thaddeus, OCD*