

## The Brothers of Jesus (14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

### Ezekiel 2:2-5—The Prophet is Sent to a Rebellious House

1. Ezekiel: a priest who was called by God to be a prophet in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
2. Mission: “I send you to...a nation of rebels” (2:3, 5)

### Psalm 123—Have Mercy on Us, O LORD

1. Mercy: “our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he have mercy upon us” (v.2)

### 2 Corinthians 12:7-10—“My Power is Made Perfect in Weakness”

1. Paul’s “thorn in the flesh”: temptation? physical pain? eye-problems? (12:7)

### Mark 6:1-6—Nazareth’s Unbelief

1. Nazareth Synagogue: Jesus teaches in synagogue in “his own country” (6:1-2)
2. People’s Response: they “took offense” (Greek *skandalizō*) at him (1:3)
4. Scandal of Jesus’ Humanity:
  - a. Tradesman: “Is not this the carpenter/builder” (Greek *tektōn*)?
  - b. Human Mother: Is not this “the son of Mary”?
5. Jesus Response: “A prophet is not without honor...” (6:4)
6. Miracles: no “mighty works” because of their “unbelief” (Greek *apistia*) (6:6)

### Who are the “Brothers” of Jesus? His Relatives

1. Meaning of the Word “Brother” (Greek *adelphos*)
  - a. Blood Sibling: Peter and Andrew his “brother” (*adelphos*) (Mark 1:16)
  - b. Close Relative: “brothers” (*adelphoi*) of daughters of Eleazar (1 Chr 23:21-23)

The sons of Mahli [were] Eleazar and Kish. And Eleazar died, but he had no sons, only daughters. And *the sons of Kish, their brothers, married them.* (1 Chronicles 23:21-22 LXX; cf. Josephus, *War* 6.356-57)

2. Four Brothers Named: “James, Joses/Joseph, Simon, and Judas” (6:3)
3. “James and Joses”: sons of *another* woman named “Mary”:

There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome... (Mark 15:40; cf. 15:47, 16:1)

4. Jesus identifies them as his “cousins/relatives” (Greek *syngenēs*) (6:4)!

### The Catechism on the Perpetual Virginity of Mary and the “Brothers” of Jesus

[T]he Church celebrates Mary as *Aeiparthenos*, the “Ever-virgin.” Against this doctrine the objection is sometimes raised that the Bible mentions brothers and sisters of Jesus [Cf. Mk 3:31-35; 6:3] The Church has always understood these passages as not referring



### For Further Study

1. Brant Pitre. *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary: Unveiling the Mother of the Messiah* (New York: Image Books, 2018). Chapter 5. A readable but thorough treatment of the evidence for Mary's perpetual virginity and the identity of the "brothers" of Jesus, with detailed reference to Jewish sources.
2. Jerome, *On the Perpetual Virginity of Mary* (available at <http://newadvent.org/fathers/3007.htm>) The classic defense of Mary's perpetual virginity by a saint and doctor of the church.