The Brothers of Jesus (14th 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 6th century B.C.

2. <u>Mission</u>: "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. <u>People's Response</u>: they "took offense" (Greek skandalizo) at him (1:3)
- 4. Scandal of Jesus' Humanity:
 - a. Tradesman: "Is not this the carpenter/builder" (Greek *tekton*)?
 - 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)

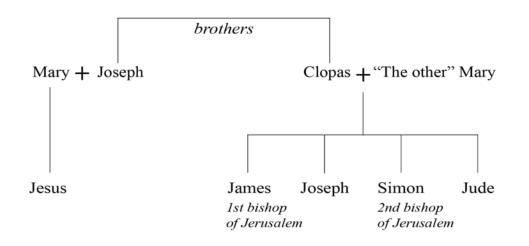
4. Jesus identifies them as his "cousins/relatives" (Greek syngenēs) (6:4)!

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

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to other children of the Virgin Mary. *In fact James and Joseph, "brothers of Jesus," are the sons of another Mary,* a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls "the other Mary." [Mt 13:55; 28:1; cf. Mt 27:56] *They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression* (CCC 499-500)



Questions for Discussion and Reflection (14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. Why do the people of Nazareth reject Jesus? Why are they "scandalized" by him?

2. Why is Jesus "unable" to do any "mighty works" in Nazareth? What role does human "faith" play in the miracles of Jesus?

3. Who are the so-called "brothers" of Jesus? Who does the Catholic Church teach that they are? Why? (cf. CCC 499-500)

The Mass Readings Explained

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.
- Jerome, On the Perpetual Virginity of Mary (available at <u>http://newadvent.org/fathers/</u><u>3007.htm</u>) The classic defense of Mary's perpetual virginity by a saint and doctor of the church.