

4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

January 31st, 2010

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA
Rev. Jeff McGowan

1ST READING: JEREMIAH 1: 4-5, 17-19

They will fight against you but will not prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.

PSALM 71

In you, O Lord, I take refuge; Let me never be put to shame.

2ND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 13: 1-13

At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face.

GOSPEL: LUKE 4:21-30

And Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.

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In one of his best-known “Purity of Heart” parables, Soren Kierkegaard—the Christian philosopher—pictures a wealthy man driving along at night in his well lighted carriage, looking comfortable and secure. But because of the light that surrounds him and the material security he feels, the wealthy man never sees the stars on a magnificent starry night. He never sees beyond his little, well-lighted, warm secure world. Kierkegaard is telling us how tragic it is for our life when we allow the false sense of security we receive from material things to obscure our “view of the stars,” that is, our view of God.

In first century Palestine, the people of Judea and Galilee fudged and hedged on the proclamation of the reign of God. Jesus announced that the old era was done and the new age had dawned, and the only appropriate response was to be captivated with joy and wonder.

His listeners did not say, “Yes, Rabbi, we believe you,” or “No, Rabbi, we think you are a fool.” Instead they said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” “What about the tax grabbing Romans?” or “When are you going to produce one of your famous miracles?” or “Why aren’t you and your disciples following Jewish Law?”

Since the day Jesus appeared on the scene, we have developed vast theological systems, organized worldwide churches, filled libraries with brilliant Christological scholarship, engaged in earth shaking controversies, and embarked on crusades, reforms, renewals and regressions. Yet there are still

precious few of us with sufficient faith to make the exchange of everything for Christ; only a remnant with the confidence to risk even 10% on the gospel of grace; only a minority who dance about with the delirious joy of the man who found the perfect pearl.

The nattering nabobs of negativity that crowd our airwaves are trying to sell us something that has more to do with maintaining their lifestyle and ego than it does to the truth. They are motivated, so they stir us up and we buy their product. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is truth. It invites us to celebrate who we are, to be grateful for all we have and secure in God's love. But we are like the mediocre teacher with tenure, feeling secure and complacent. One day we will look into the eyes of Jesus of Nazareth and see the love that went to the cross for us. Then we will understand true love and all we've missed by listening to the wrong voices and following the wrong philosophy of life. It will be too late; of course, our opportunity to be the good news to the poor will have been wasted. We will leave behind all that were so important: our bodies, our families, our friends, our homes, our vehicles, our books, everything we put ahead of the reign of God will be meaningless. When confronted with the truth of the new age of Jesus Christ, do we deflect to the mundane as his neighbors did or do we embrace the truth that sets us free to see the stars, that is, to see God? If we fulfill the Scripture that has been proclaimed in our hearing we will be good news!