

Born two-thousand, six-hundred, thirty-five years ago ... the Greek slave, Aesop, is known even into the present age for his story telling. Of his over eighty fables – that is short tales with a moral lesson – are *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, *The Fox and the Grapes*, and *The Ant and the Grasshopper*.

These stories are so familiar that the idioms “*crying wolf*,” and “*sour grapes*” come from the first two; while the last tale is seen as promoting the virtue of hard work.

Another of Aesop’s fables, titled *The Lion and the Fox* is as follows:

*A fox had never seen a lion before, so when she happened to meet the lion for the first time she all but died of fright. The second time she saw him, she was still afraid, but not as much as before. The third time, the fox was bold enough to go right up to the lion and speak to him.*

The moral of the story, from ancient sources, is “*that acquaintance overcomes fear.*” More contemporary sources render the moral as “*familiarity breeds contempt.*”

Today is the 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time.

In today’s Gospel, we hear that Jesus – on His return home – is treated without honor.

Those who knew Him best lacked the simple Faith for Him to perform any miracles. Instead of recognizing the presence of the Christ in their midst, they only saw “*the carpenter, the son of Mary*”. They knew His relatives, and “*took offense at him.*”

The Gospel writer tells us that Jesus “*was amazed at their lack of faith.*” Indeed, their familiarity with Jesus and His families led to their contempt ... their taking offense ... at His teaching and His preaching.

Born in Jerusalem in roughly the same year as Aesop was born in Greece, the prophet Ezekiel is sent by God to remind the people of their covenant promises. Yet, rather than honor their commitment to God, they have “*rebelled against [God]*” and “*revolted against [Him].*”

Ezekiel is written in Babylon, where Israel has been exiled for their infidelity to God. Despite being the Chosen People and having familiarity with God's Law, Israel's lack of faithfulness shows their contempt for the LORD.

Ezekiel's name is a Hebrew phrase meaning "*God will strengthen.*"

In St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, he "*boast[s] most gladly of [his] weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with [him].*"

God's power "*is made perfect in [our] weakness*" when we realize that His "*grace is sufficient for [us].*"

Too often, we seek power in ways that run contrary to God's call on our lives. We abandon the Way of Christ for the way of the world, and pursue vain things such as money, power, possessions, and control. When we turn our backs on God, we demonstrate our contempt for Him ... rejecting the generous offer of a relationship with the Father through our fellowship with Jesus Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit.

And, indeed, it is only when we maintain a healthy "fear of the LORD" – that is, a reverence and respect for what God asks of us – that we can truly find the power of Christ in our lives. Repenting of our worldly choices and choosing instead to embrace the Will of God in our lives.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us renew our commitment to Christ. Let us set aside any worldly obstacles that make us dependent on sin and prevent us from living out our Christian call in the freedom we should enjoy as the children of God.

May the Eucharist we receive today unite us with Almighty God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – so that we might go forth from this place as messengers of the Gospel ... so that the Kingdom of God may rule in our hearts, in our homes, and in our lives.